



THE TIMES

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Miniskirts, flower power, protest and paranoia... 1968, when the Sixties were really swinging

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Three-year referendum campaign to decide fate of the pound now begins in earnest

Euro dream transformed into reality

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

EUROPEAN dreamers finally saw their cherished hope become reality at midnight when 11 countries signed away their sovereignty over monetary policy and the single currency was born.

The birth of the euro was marked in Brussels with a mass balloon launch and toast poured from methuselahs of champagne as ministers spoke of a great moment in history and set their sights on deeper political and economic union.

But there were still sour notes amid the rhetoric, with a public spat between France and Wim Duisenberg over whether he would step down as governor of the European Central Bank in favour of a Frenchman in four years.

Germany used the occasion to fire another warning shot at Britain over the need for "ending unfair competition" and for raising low rates of tax in the EU, while Jacques Santer, the European Commission president, provoked a row by insisting that Britain's eventual membership of the single currency was inevitable.

"As I understand the British Government and the Chancellor, it is not a question of if the UK will join, but when," he told BBC Radio Four's *The World This Weekend*.

EURO EXCHANGE RATES

Deutschmark	1.93633
French franc	6.55957
Italian lire	1936.27
Spanish peseta	166.639
Portuguese escudo	200.482
Finnish markka	5.94573
Irish pound	0.787564
Dutch guilder	2.20371
Austrian schilling	13.7603
Belgian franc	40.3399
Luxembourg franc	40.3399
Sterling	70.4
US dollar	1.63657
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er for setting interest rates to the Frankfurt-based ECB. These open at 3 percent.

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the French minister, set the tone by declaring: "This, December 31, 1998, will be one of the great dates in the history of the 20th century."

Other ministers invoked the history of the moment, by emphasising the dramatic political consequences of their action in creating a currency zone of 290 million people that they said would rival the United States in commercial power. "This is a decisive step towards the ever closer political union of Europe," said Carlo Ciampi of Italy.

Only Charles McCreery of Ireland acknowledged uncertainty when he said: "Everybody is joining in an experiment, and with any experiment one cannot say with 100 per cent certainty that it will be an outstanding success," he said. Ireland was worried about the absence of Britain, its main trading partner, he added.

M Strauss Kahn told *The Times* that the "Euro-11" council of finance ministers would rapidly become the "economic government of Europe", setting policy to match the monetary power of the ECB. And Germany, which takes over the EU presidency today, has an ambitious programme for further integration. Werner Muller, the Economy Minister,



Children waiting for the launch of 3,000 balloons to mark the launch of the euro in Brussels yesterday. The grown-ups drank champagne

warmed other members that Germany expected rapid moves to more common policies. "The euro requires economic co-operation in Europe. Unfair competition is bad," With Britain clearly in his sights, he added: "National actions at the cost of other member states will endanger our success." The first step must be immediate completion of a code of conduct on business taxation. The code, now under negotiation, is aimed at eliminating "unfair" low-tax regimes.

Britain, which was alone among the 15 EU states in fail-

ing to send a minister to the Brussels event, despatched Sir Stephen Wall, its EU ambassador, to wish the project well. The Government was "fully committed to doing all it can to ensure that success," Sir Stephen said.

Although the new notes and coins will not appear for three years, the euro is now the standard currency of Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. Denmark, Sweden, Britain and Greece remain outside. Pesetas, francs, marks and other national cur-

rencies become arithmetically awkward sub-divisions, with, for example, one euro being worth 6.66667 French francs. But in a move aimed at opening competition and cutting costs, euros can immediately be used for cheques, bank accounts, credit cards, company accounts and bills and stock market prices.

The fixing of the rates started a frantic weekend for more than 50,000 staff in the City of London and other European financial centres in preparation for switching all trading to euros on Monday.

The launch of the euro also

saw the start of the real battle for the pound, with enthusiasts and sceptics firing their first shots in what is likely to be a bitter struggle in the coming years.

Eighteen leading members of the Business for Sterling pressure group write in a letter to *The Times* today that the single currency could exacerbate Europe's economic problems and that while they wish the euro well, they insist that Britain should stay outside. And Paul Sykes, who financed many sceptical MPs in the last election campaign, promises in *The Times* that writes in

The Times that anti-European groups would give no quarter in the battle to keep Britain outside. The euro would "fatally undermine the legitimacy of our domestic democratic institutions," he writes.

But Sir Leon Brittan, vice-chairman of the European Commission, predicted that Britain would join in three years' time when people realised they were missing out on the advantages of the euro. "Britain shouldn't be left behind," he said, while Lord Howe of Aberavon urged Tony Blair to "take risks" and set a date for joining.

Carey pleads for refugees

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, is to make an appeal today for greater public understanding of the world's 50 million refugees forced from their homes by war, natural disaster or persecution.

In his message on BBC1 this morning, the Archbishop will criticise the British media for "snipping up" fear and hostility against the 50,000 asylum seekers in this country.

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Et tu Brutus? Jenkins was ready to ban French wines

By ADRIAN LEE AND JAMES LANDALE

LORD JENKINS of Hillhead admitted yesterday that in 1968 he was the architect of a secret Labour plan, code-named Brutus, to ban foreign holidays and stop luxury imports. French wine, Swiss watches, avocados and out-of-season strawberries were on the list to save the economy.

Lord Jenkins, then the Labour Chancellor, and not unknown for his love of claret, drew up the contingency scheme in such secrecy that only Harold Wilson, the Prime Minister, and a handful of Cabinet ministers were aware of its existence.

Despite devaluation in 1967, the pound was still under pressure in March 1968 after two months of poor trade figures. The Government was desperate to avoid a second devaluation.



Jenkins' emergency plan to save the economy

tion which would have jeopardised its future but had few currency reserves to support sterling. The existence of Brutus, which was never implemented, is revealed today in Cabinet papers released from the Public Record Office under the 30-year rule. The 18-page

plan was drafted eight times by a small group of trusted economic advisers and ready by the summer of 1968 to be implemented within a week in the event of a "major external catastrophe" such as the gold crisis of earlier that year.

The documents reveal that Brutus could also have been implemented if two further poor sets of balance of payments figures were published. It would also have seen banks closed for four days, and sterling assets held by foreign countries blocked. Wages were to have been frozen, embassy staff paid and defence and foreign-aid spending cut.

A less severe alternative involved setting quotas to limit the import of items such as cut flowers, jam, beer, chocolate and stockings. It was estimated that the move would save Britain £910 million in 1969. Wilson and his colleagues

agonised over the inclusion of tinned salmon on the list. According to one paper, although savings of £8.7 million would be made "a shortage would be unpopular particularly in the North of England where it is a traditional high tea food". Similarly, quotas on tinned fruit could damage the Australian economy.

Lord Jenkins, now a senior Liberal Democrat, said yesterday that the plans were very much his "baby". He said: "They were drawn up in the Treasury. Harold Wilson was in a very supine mood at that time."

Asked about the potential impact on his reputation of banning goods such as avocados, he dismissed the question as "trivial". He said: "It would have been very foolish if it would not plan for worst cases."

The 1968 files, pages 4, 5

Hostages furious at delays

SURVIVORS of the Yemen hostage crisis criticised ministers yesterday for failing to send an RAF aircraft to bring them home swiftly.

Their journey to Britain will be in three stages: a flight from Aden to Sanaa in North Yemen, a Yemen Airways flight to Paris, and then, after a three-hour wait, a British Airways connection to Gatwick.

The Foreign Office in London yesterday summoned Yemen's Ambassador to demand an explanation for the delay in which three Britons and an Australian died.

One of the freed men, David Holmes, said: "I have had enough of this farce. Why haven't our government done more?" Laurence Whitehouse, whose wife Margaret died in the shoot-out, said: "We are sick of being shuffled around."

Yemen 'whitewash', page 9

Happy MDCCCCLXXXVIII. Or is it?

By GILES WHITTELL

WELCOME to the year MIM, as the Emperor Flavianus might have said. Then again, he might have preferred to wish his subjects a happy new MCMXCIX. Or should that be MCMXCVIII? We have no idea, but some guidance from the ancients would have been useful; 23 centuries after the invention of Roman numerals, confusion reigns as to how they should be used to indicate the year 1999. The Year 1999 Problem has left architects dithering over how to inscribe their cornerstones and film studios in a quandary over the dating of their new releases.

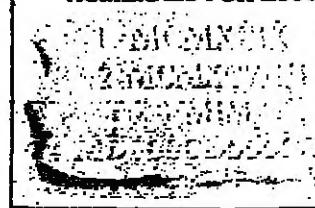
Using the Romans' system of numer-

als in its simplest form, the year that begins today is MDCCCCLXXXVIII — enough to make a stone-mason change trades. Instead, short-cuts were devised, the best-known of which is simple subtraction — the system by which IX equals nine and XIX is 19.

For modern scholars, however, subtraction adds a problem. Roman numerals were based, some say, on signs people used to count with their fingers. With no single inventor to etch in stone a manual for their proper use, it remains unclear when, if ever, subtraction was acceptable for formal dating.

Paul Lewis, a London book collector, says the figures XL, or 50 minus 10, or 40, were found among the ruins of Fla-

COMPETING ROMAN NUMERALS FOR 1999



avius's Colosseum. Others, like the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Washington, which has been assigned the Year 1999 problem by the US Government, claim subtraction is largely a 19th-century convenience.

Dr Peter Jones, the classical scholar, said: "It's fascinating. The fact is that the notation can be either additive or subtractive. Both methods are employed, sometimes in the same document. There is no consistency about it."

"On official documents like inscriptions, however, there seems to be a preference for the additive method. In other words we find, for example, IIII rather than IV. If you are drawing up an official document then the Romans would have preferred the additive method MDCCCCLXXXVIII."

So, best wishes it is for MDC-

CCCLXXXVIII.

Leading article, page 17

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SAUDI ARABIA	38	102	63%	USA	5	24	79%
ISRAEL	10	79	87%	CANADA	6	24	78%
GERMANY	6	29	79%	AUSTRALIA	7	49	86%
SOUTH AFRICA	28	80	65%	NEW ZEALAND	8	49	84%
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Embrace the refugees, says Archbishop

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN
SOCIAL AFFAIRS
CORRESPONDENT

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, will today appeal for greater public understanding of the 50 million refugees throughout the world, uprooted from their homes by persecution, war or natural disaster.

In his annual new-year message, to be broadcast at 12.30pm on BBC1 today, Dr Carey criticises the media in Britain for whipping up "fear and hostility" against the 50,000 or so asylum-seekers in this country and suggests it is wrong to think of them merely as welfare "scroungers".

"The presence of strangers can make us nervous or even angry. But people don't readily uproot themselves from all that is familiar — choosing to leave homeland, family and friends is probably the most painful decision they will ever have to make," he says.

Dr Carey points out that the baby Jesus, whose family was forced to flee to Egypt shortly after his birth, is probably his-



Marlene Dietrich: one of most famous refugees

tory's best-known refugee. He adds that some of the great names of our century have been refugees, including Albert Einstein, the Jewish mathematician who left Germany for the United States following Hitler's rise to power in 1934; Marc Chagall, the Jewish painter who fled Russia for France in 1922; and the German actress Marlene Dietrich, who settled in the United States.

The Archbishop's speech was inspired by a meeting he

had earlier this week with two Romanian children from Slovakia: Tina, 9, and Puckie, 6, who are seeking asylum in Britain with their parents. The family left their homeland two years ago as a result of growing discrimination against Romanians.

Once in Britain the family faced further hostility and were forced to move to a different town after a brick was thrown through the window of their home.

Drawing on the Christian theme of hospitality to strangers, Dr Carey stresses the importance of providing both a material and spiritual home for every body.

"While we hope and pray that Tina and Puckie and other refugees may find a place they may call home, each of us is a spiritual refugee travelling through life, looking for the one of whom it is said in the Scripture: 'The Eternal God is your refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.' That is where we can all find a place called home," he says.

His speech comes amid growing political and public concern over what to do about the thousands of refugees coming into Britain each year. More than 45,000 refugees are now seeking asylum in the UK, most in London and the South East, with a continuing influx from war-torn Kosovo and Albania. The Home Office has already admitted that it is facing the biggest immigration crisis in a decade.

Local authorities are obliged to look after asylum-seekers who arrive on their doorstep. South East England has been most hard-pressed because many arrive at London's airports or the Channel ports.

Refugees can choose any local authority to ask for help. They are usually accommodated in bed-and-breakfast or cheap rented flats. Single adults are only entitled to food vouchers and shelter under the National Assistance Act 1948 which requires councils to help the destitute. They cannot be given cash.



Seconds out: Brian Tipper cleaning the face of Big Ben's clock yesterday ready for the new year chimes. The mechanism was adjusted to add a second to the last minute of 1998, to keep time with atomic clocks

Prescott seeks to counter image of strife

BY ROLAND WATSON

JOHN PRESCOTT insisted yesterday he was "fully on board" Tony Blair's modernising crusade as he tried to counter the impression of a Cabinet riven by power struggles after Peter Mandelson's departure. But the Deputy Prime Minister gave the clearest indication yet that he believed the Prime Minister's policy of working with the Liberal Democrats had gone far enough. He used the past tense when asked about further areas of co-operation. He said he fully supported cross-party efforts on devolution. But he added: "What we carried out was in the manifesto and what the Prime Minister put forward." His comments provided the strongest sign that Mr Prescott would oppose any moves to offer Paddy Ashdown a Cabinet post.

Mr Prescott insisted he was behind the Government's legislative proposals and dismissed reports of rifts at the top of the Cabinet as "prattle". He told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "We are a modernising government. There is a new Labour Government that has produced a radical programme that we can be really proud of, and I am very supportive of all those measures."

With Mr Blair abroad, Mr Prescott had previously used a newspaper interview to say that he and the Chancellor had agreed on a more interventionist approach to the economy. The Left used his embrace of "the Keynesian way" to demand that traditional Labour values return to the heart of policy making. But yesterday he tried to calm the festering influence that has followed Mr Mandelson's resignation, denying that he was taking advantage of Mr Blair's absence to flex his muscles.

Downing Street sources said No 10 was relaxed about Mr Prescott's earlier comments, which they said had been designed to show that claims of a feud between Mr Prescott and Mr Brown were untrue. The sources added that his views on co-operation with the Liberal Democrats were well known, and similar to those of some other ministers.

SUCCESS SPRUNG FROM PERSECUTION

Ben Elton: comedian. Grandfather Victor Ehrenberg was eminent historian and a refugee from Czechoslovakia.

The Fugees: rap group. Two members who are also solo artists — Wyclef Jean and Pras Michel — are both from Haiti. Lord (Lewis) Grade: Jewish Russian refugee. TV mogul with brother Leslie. Until his death last month was chairman of the Grade Co and ITC entertainment. Michael, son of Leslie Grade, is former controller of BBC1 and chief executive of Channel 4. Now chairman of First Leisure.

Lord (Paul) Hamlyn: publishing tycoon and patron of the arts. Came from Germany as a six-year-old refugee.

Margaret Hodge, MP: father was a refugee from Nazi Germany.

Sir Richard Rogers: archi-

tect. Mother was refugee from Trieste in 1938.

Lord (Maurice) and Charles Saatchi: advertising tycoons. Sons of Iranian Jewish refugee textile merchant.

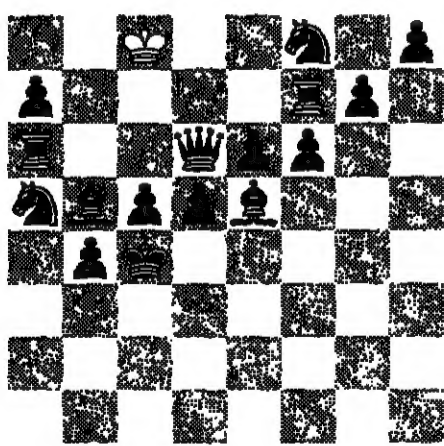
Tanya Sarnecka: fashion designer and creator of Ghost label. Father was a Russian refugee who fled to London in 1939.

Sir Georg Solti: conductor. Was director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in the 1960s and went on to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Born in Budapest, he was a refugee from the Nazi regime.

Christopher Wreh: footballer, plays for Arsenal. He escaped to France from Liberia when he was 14.

Alek Weis: model from Sudan. When she was 14, her family were forced to flee after a military coup.

easy@demon[no.2]



black to win in as many moves as it takes .

Tories call for more studies of GM crops

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE Tories yesterday called for a delay of at least three years on the commercial growing of genetically modified crops to allow time for more research into their safety.

Tim Yeo, the Shadow Agriculture Minister, said that widespread anxieties about such crops needed to be allayed if their potentially significant benefits for future food production were to be realised. Commercial planting should be postponed for at least the rest of this Parliament, Mr Yeo said, by which time a number of government-commissioned studies on the environmental impact of genetically modified crops would have been completed.

"We will have a lot more information by then and the position could be reviewed," he said. There is a very strong argument for somewhat more caution than the Government has so far shown, and very little to be lost by slowing down a bit."

He added: "Many environmental groups have called for a moratorium for up to three years to ensure a proper examination of the impact of genetically modified organisms on the British countryside."

"The Labour Government's attitude to this is not clear but

the case for delay has been strengthened by their failure to provide full details of their own testing."

"Against this background I believe the commercial release of such crops should be delayed until the results of government-commissioned studies on the impact of genetically modified crops are available," he said.

In October the Government announced that it had reached a voluntary agreement with the plant-breeding industry for a delay of at least three years in the commercial growing of any crops genetically engineered to be resistant to insect pests.



Yeo: wants moratorium on planting new crops

Hague enlists rank-and-file help on policy

BY ROLAND WATSON, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

RANK-and-file Tories will for the first time be given direct input into policymaking in what William Hague yesterday described as a year of fundamental change for his party.

Mr Hague said that 1999 had to be the "year of ideas", new thinking and fresh language, and announced a radical overhaul of policies to put the Tories "back on the electoral map".

A new mechanism for policy-making will give party activists, outside experts and backbench MPs a say in the direction of the party. The aim is to broaden the appeal of policies and try to ensure they are guaranteed a high degree of popular support before they are sprung on voters.

Shadow cabinet ministers are to head new "policy agenda groups" covering issues ranging from health, welfare and education to agriculture, local government and the economy. They will be expected to discuss policy with outside experts, including academics and those at the sharp end in each field, along with members of the party's rank and file and backbench MPs.

The groups will use the preliminary results of the party's Listening to Britain campaign as their starting point, and

will be encouraged to commission further research. The initial proposals will be pulled together in an Agenda for Britain, which will be published and debated by the party later in the year.

Although Tories will deny that they are reacting to the "focus group" approach adopted by Labour before the last election, the development means that policies will be tested to a far greater degree before they are unveiled.

The details came in a letter from Mr Hague to local constituency party chairmen, delivered as he spent his winter holiday in Montana.

Mr Hague said that the party could not simply rely on the Government and the Liberal Democrats to make mistakes. "We need to develop a fresh, positive and compassionate Conservative agenda for the next century. That means a thorough overhaul of all our policies," he said.

In his letter, Mr Hague said: "Each time our great party has been in opposition, we have turned misfortune to our advantage and developed the new thinking that has taken a new generation of Conservatives back into government. Now it falls to us to begin that process again."

Motorists warned of fuel 'scam'

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

MINISTERS are to issue warnings to prevent a multimillion-pound "scam" misleading motorists into having their car engines converted unnecessarily.

About six million motorists will be unable to buy leaded petrol for their cars from January 2000, when a European Union ban comes into force. Ministers are worried that unscrupulous garage mechanics will try to persuade drivers to pay up to £500 to have their engines converted to run on unleaded petrol, when many will do so without a conversion.

A national information campaign will

be mounted this month in garages, service stations and MOT testing centres, telling motorists to beware of those pressing them to have expensive conversions.

Up to three-and-a-half million cars running on leaded petrol will be able to switch to unleaded without any changes. Other engines will need adjustments to their ignition timing.

Motorists driving an estimated 2.3 million cars whose engines could be harmed by unleaded petrol will be able to buy "lead replacement petrol" from the autumn, as leaded petrol is phased out. The petrol contains additional lubricant to reduce engine wear.

The information campaign will stress

that motorists should seek advice from motoring organisations, car manufacturers or petrol retailers on the best alternative to leaded petrol.

The ban on leaded fuel, which has been in force in many European countries for several years, is intended to reduce pollution. But the Treasury will lose about £500 million a year from the higher rates of duty charged on four-star leaded petrol, which costs about 6 pence a litre more than unleaded petrol.

Ministers concede that it is unlikely that this money could be recouped from motorists, who already face a 9 per cent increase in duty, equivalent to about 2 pence per litre this year.

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Avalanche survivors tell of lonely wait for rescuers



Sarah Finch and Steven Newton: lost contact in snow.

By GILLIAN HARRIS AND
STEPHEN FARRER

THE young couple buried beneath an avalanche in the Highlands yesterday told how they lay unable to move for 16 hours, not knowing if the other was alive or dead.

Sarah Finch, 25, and her boyfriend, Steven Newton, 24, from Darford, Kent, were recovering from mild hypothermia in Fort William yesterday. Four friends died in the avalanche on Aonach Mor on Tuesday. Their guide, Roger Wild, survived.

Miss Finch said their group of Venture Scout leaders had stopped 2,000ft up the mountain while the guide checked the route ahead. "The

snow came from behind us. It knocked us off our feet and then what seemed to be a second wave of snow covered our heads. The next thing I remember is being trapped in almost a block of ice with just a small little space which I dug out to breathe.

"As far as I could remember I was shouting all night but the rescue team said I was so deep that even when they were digging me out they couldn't hear me. I heard somebody shouting. I didn't know who it was, but I now know it was Steve. I heard Roger shouting right at the very end when the rescue team was digging us out."

For Mr Newton it was the second lucky escape. In 1990 his sailing boat

went missing for 24 hours at sea in a storm, prompting his parents last night to say that he had led a "charmed life".

Describing the avalanche, he said: "I remember waking up and not being able to move any of my limbs: panicking because I am claustrophobic and I had snow all around me in a tiny space. I thrashed my head around and managed to enlarge the space, and throughout the night I slowly managed to get one arm out and then the other."

"I found an ice axe in the snow which I used to try and dig my way out. Towards the end of the night I managed to get a hole to the surface and tried to drag myself out but my

feet were trapped. I couldn't get my feet loose at all. I tried shouting during the night and I did hear a female voice. I couldn't decide if it was Sarah."

Mr Newton said: "I was overwhelmed at getting out, not having known if there would be another wave of snow coming down while I was trapped there. It was so frustrating at the time as I had dug my way to the surface and just could not get out to start digging for other people. I just had to lie there and wait."

Asked if he would embark on a similar exercise again, he said: "It will take quite a while to come to terms with what has happened and the loss of our good friends."

The three survivors were expected to spend one more night in hospital. Miss Finch, an embryologist, suffered injuries to her elbow, leg, ankle and a finger and Mr Newton, a transmissions engineer, injured his left foot.

Brian Tregaskis, a consultant physician at Fort William Hospital, said: "They are extremely lucky individuals. Their physical injuries are at a minimum."

Mr Wild said in a statement: "My main thoughts are with the bereaved families. I am very pleased that two of the group have survived and would like to thank the rescue team and the medical services for their prompt and professional actions, which undoubtedly saved our lives."

Father tells of vain fight to save sea boy

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A FATHER told yesterday of how he fought for 34 hours to keep his nine-year-old son alive in icy waters after their boat sank during their first fishing trip together, only for the boy to die at hospital.

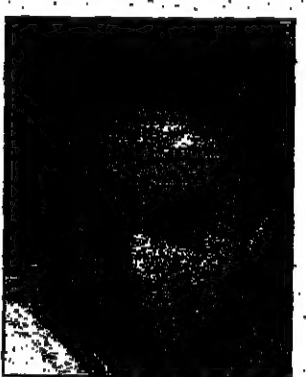
Jonathan Vowles and two friends sang and cuddled the boy, Lewis, while they tried water, waiting to be rescued. Despite their efforts, Lewis slipped in and out of consciousness and died in hospital of hypothermia.

Mr Vowles, 35, told his family from his hospital bed: "We did everything we could. The water was very cold and we knew we had to keep Lewis awake."

"I hugged and cuddled him and we took it in turns to lift him clear of the water. We sang songs to him and whenever he looked like falling asleep we shook him and slapped his face to keep him awake."

Mr Vowles had bought his son a fishing rod for Christmas and had promised to take him out to sea. The boy, who lived with his mother and elder sister in Brighton, had spent Christmas with his father and his second wife at their home at Tonypre, in south Wales.

His grandfather, Harry Vowles, said yesterday: "Lewis had been looking forward to it



Lewis Vowles: died on his first fishing trip

all over Christmas and could talk about nothing else."

Lewis and his father set off on their expedition as soon as the weather improved after Christmas. They made the 20-mile trip to the harbour at Penarth, near Cardiff, with their friends, Steve Buck, 19, and Kevin Gardner, 32, the owner of their 16-foot boat *Helen Marie*.

The party had been fishing for four hours when Mr Vowles said his wife, Jane, on his mobile phone to say they were calling it a day.

Mr Vowles said: "Five minutes later a hole suddenly appeared in the boat as if we had struck something. The boat sank so quickly we couldn't get off an emergency flare."

The three men and the boy,

all of whom were wearing life-jackets, scrambled out of the boat as it went down two miles offshore in an area known as the Newport Deep. They blew whistles as two tankers passed nearby, but the ships failed to see them. They had been in the water for almost four hours when they were heard by the crew of another tanker, *The Astir*, which was waiting for a pilot to guide it into Newport.

The group were picked up by an inshore lifeboat, then winched aboard an RAF helicopter. Lewis was unconscious when he was taken to Cardiff Royal Infirmary. His father and friends were treated for hypothermia at the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff.

Coastguards said that the group was well equipped with life-jackets and whistles, but that the slightly built nine-year-old stood little chance in such cold water.

A report on the accident is being compiled for the Cardiff Coroner Dr Lawrence Addicott, and an inquiry by the Marine Accident Investigation Bureau is also under way.

Chief Inspector Paul Kemp, of South Wales Police, described the accident as "tragic".

"We are still trying to recover the boat from the waters to examine it to discover how it capsized," he said.



After: at a trim 9st 3lb, Mrs Miles can now go clothes shopping with her daughter



Before: Beverley Miles weighed in at 24st 11lb

Fear of death led woman to lose 15st

By RUSSELL JENKINS

BEVERLEY MILES is an inspiration to anyone resolving to slim down to a fighting weight in the new year. She has lost 15 stone in two years.

The 35-year-old mother from Great Sankey, Cheshire, once weighed 25 stone and shopped for clothes in the 32-plus range. Now she is officially a size 10 — petite.

Mrs Miles has enjoyed the most dramatic weight loss among five finalists in the *Slimming* magazine slimmer of the year award. She said: "I feel literally

that I have been given a second chance at life. The quality of my life has improved tremendously. I can now go to aerobic classes with my 15-year-old daughter Tina and shop for clothes in the same store."

Two years ago it was very different. At almost 15 stone overweight, it is no surprise I constantly thought about dying."

Mrs Miles, who is only 5ft 4in tall, weighed 24st 11lb. Now she tips the scales at a trim 9st 3lb.

Saggy cat gives rivals a stuffing

BAGPUSS, the saggy old cloth cat, has been declared the all-time favourite children's programme in a national poll.

More than 40,000 BBC viewers cast their votes by post, telephone or e-mail to affirm their love for the cuddly pink and yellow striped cat, ahead of shows including *The Magic Roundabout*, *Bill and Ben* and *Play School*.

Bagpuss made his debut in 1974 as part of *Watch With Mother*. Only 13 episodes were made by Smallfilms, which also made *Noggin the Nog*. Bagpuss told stories with friends including Professor Yaffle the woodpecker and the mice from the Mouse Organ.

Lorraine Heggessey, head of BBC Children's Production, said: "It is always programmes we watched when we were youngest that have a special place in our hearts. Bagpuss is a favourite with today's twenty-somethings and it's great to see that they are just as keen to wallow in nostalgia as the rest



Bagpuss's career lasted for only 13 episodes

of us." Bagpuss will be declared the winner on BBC1 today during *Are You Sitting Comfortably?*, a tribute to children's programmes.

The video for Michael Jackson's 1983 hit *Thriller*, in which he became a werewolf, has been voted best pop video of all time. Nearly 100,000 people voted in the poll, held by the cable television channel VHI.

Cartoon ties the limit for business women

By JOANNA BALE

MEN who wear ties decorated with pictures of cartoon characters may think they are expressing a wacky sense of humour but to their women colleagues they denote immaturity and bad taste.

According to a survey of 300 women delegates at conference centres around Britain, a knot of pure silk with a subtle geometric pattern is far preferable to a garish slash of stain-resistant polyester featuring novelty sheep.

Top of the hate list were Disney characters such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, followed by the comic book hero Dennis the Menace and the animated Plasticine duo Wallace and Gromit.

A resounding 81 per cent of the female managers surveyed said choice of tie was an important factor when it came to making first impressions with clients, while 74 per cent said unsuitable appearance at



Knotty problem: women were unimpressed

work would lessen chances of promotion. In spite of their dubious merits, novelty ties continue to be big sellers in thousands of stores, from the high street retail chain Ties Rack to the designer emporium Hermes.

The department store John Lewis found them to be such a money-spinner that they commissioned an extensive range

under their own brand Jonelle featuring animals such as pigs, flamingoes, and tortoises, and a selection of vegetables, priced at £12.50. A spokeswoman said: "They sell very well, particularly in our London stores. There are obviously thousands of men out there who love to brighten up their suits with them."

The French designer Hermes, which makes silk ties featuring animals and trees for a cool £65, also declared them to be top sellers. Fabienne Kozel at the New Bond Street store in London said: "Last year was our Year of Africa, so we had ties featuring animals such as elephants, giraffes and zebras, which were top sellers."

"This year is the Year of the Tree, so we have ties featuring trees, which are also popular. Next year is the Year of the Galaxy, so we will have moons and stars. They are nothing like cartoon ties — they are very recognisable as Hermes."

Explosives used to recover body

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

THE body of a potholer trapped underground for more than 17 hours was recovered yesterday.

Peter Fowler, 45, an experienced caver, collapsed unconscious in a narrow passage about 50ft down. Twenty volunteer teams, including mine rescue teams, police divers and fire crews, worked through the night in an attempt to bring him to the surface.

Explosives were used to widen the narrow gap to reach Mr Fowler, who could be seen by rescuers, while cavers used hand chisels to chip away rocks. They worked on even when it was clear that the man had died.

Mr Fowler and another potholer had been exploring caves above the River Taff near Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales when Mr Fowler blacked out.

His fellow caver went to the surface to raise the alarm.



Peter Fowler: blacked out in narrow tunnel

West Brecon cave rescue team member Gary Evans said: "We had to use every method we could think of because there was very little room to move and conditions were extremely muddy."

A post-mortem examination is to be carried out next week by a Home Office pathologist, although police suspect he died from natural causes.

Man killed at son's wedding

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A BRIDEGROOM'S father was hit and killed by a car as he videotaped his son's wedding reception in the village of Over Alderley, Cheshire.

David Swift, 54, a retired lecturer, from Withey, Surrey, was trying to find a good angle from which to film his son Robert, 25, and his bride, Rebecca, 28, leave for their honeymoon. He stepped back into the Macclesfield Road with the camera to his eye as the wedding party emerged from a restaurant, and was hit by a car.

More than 20 guests, including his wife, Jane, saw the accident. One of the wedding party, a nurse, and a passing paramedic tried to administer first aid but Mr Swift was pronounced dead on arrival at the Macclesfield District General Hospital.

Inspector Paul Jennings, of Cheshire police, said that no charges had been laid over the accident.

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Brown letter drove Wilson to 17 drafts

Newly released papers throw light on Labour's troubles 30 years ago. Reports by Valerie Elliott

HAROLD WILSON was so bitter about the way George Brown quit his Government that it took 17 drafts before he could agree the traditional prime ministerial letter produced when ministers resign.

A document released today under the 30-year rule shows the many deletions and hesitations by Wilson about what he could properly say about his former Foreign Secretary.

Antisocialism had been building between the two and, amid a gold and sterling crisis, the final straw for Brown was the discovery that he had been excluded from a Privy Council meeting on the night of March 14, 1968, that agreed to order an immediate bank holiday to stem losses in gold and to freeze dealings on the foreign exchanges.

News of the meeting, held at Buckingham Palace, reached Brown at the Commons: he met colleagues to discuss the development.

Wilson was furious that Brown had held such "an irregular meeting" outside the Cabinet. An emergency Cabinet was called at 1.15am.

Cabinet committee minutes released today show that Wilson in vain emphasised to Brown that he had tried to contact him for over an hour by telephone.

In the end the meeting had gone ahead with just the Prime Minister, Roy Jenkins, the Chancellor, and Peter Shore, Economic Affairs Secretary, who made up a quorum.

The secret conclave incensed Brown, who believed it was symptomatic of Wilson's style of government.

Anthony Crosland, President of the Board of Trade, also objected, saying that other economic ministers should have been included. Shore accepted that the episode showed the secrecy of the Treasury.

Brown would not allow the discussion to move on and insisted he had never been out of telephone reach. He accused Wilson of handling the crisis "with great arrogance".

But Wilson defended his action, saying the full economic picture had not been made clear to him until 11pm. Brown hit back that Wilson and Jenkins "had acted by themselves and on their own authority".

Michael Stewart, then First Secretary of State, rebuked Brown and Crosland and said the situation "was too serious for ministers to waste time arguing about procedure".

Brown, however, was baited: he was adamant he had not been telephoned and accused Wilson of "trying to cover up a monumental muddle".

He then departed from the Cabinet. Crosland said that nobody could blame him for his action but Wilson found it unacceptable that Brown had doubted his word about attempts to contact him.

Brown, who had long been threatening to quit, wanted his exit to be memorable. In his resignation letter he publicly criticised Wilson's style of government: "The events of last night and this morning have brought to a head a really serious issue which has, as you know, been troubling me for some time. It is, in short, the way the Government is run and the manner in which we reach our decisions."

Wilson was angry that a colleague should behave like this in such a crisis, and decided to challenge Brown's version of events. A first draft of his reply read: "I cannot agree that the events... Justify the general conclusion you seek to draw from them."

He also suggested that other Cabinet ministers were "unanimous" with the decisions taken. But, given that four of the Cabinet had expressed concern, Wilson deleted the line.

Further attempts were more conciliatory: "You refer to the events of last night. As you know the most strenuous efforts were made to get in touch with you at a critical phase so that you could be brought fully into the picture." Again Wilson had second thoughts, crossed out "most strenuous efforts" and wrote "I tried unsuccessfully to get in touch with you."

Yet this was clearly too personal for Wilson after the manner of Brown's departure. In the end he wrote: "unsuccessful efforts were made to get in touch with you."

In an early version he also wrote: "It is a matter of great regret to me that you now feel unable to continue in the Government." But he authorised a subtle change. "I am sorry that your feelings about what happened last night have made you decide that you cannot continue to hold office in the Government."

Wilson even hesitated over whether to praise Brown for "his great contribution" to the Government. In one version the words are crossed out, but they appear in the final draft.



Wilson: row over emergency meeting

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George Brown, for whom the euphemism "tired and emotional" was coined

Memories are made of this

1968 WAS THE YEAR THAT...

- Labour's "I'm backing Britain" campaign took on
- Common Market countries removed last customs barriers
- Seven-sided 50p coin replaced ten shilling note
- Sir Leese Constantine became first black life peer
- Richard Nixon elected President of United States
- The Beatles set up Apple boutique, a £100,000 psychedelic shop in London's West End
- New legislation stemmed flow of Asian immigrants from East Africa
- Violent anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in London
- Southeast England hit by worst floods since 1953
- Two-day post introduced: first class and second class
- First British heart transplant at National Heart Hospital, Marylebone, by team led by Donald Ross
- Reggie and Ronnie Kay arrested
- Jackie Kennedy became Jackie Onassis
- Minister reached such heights that cleaners charged by the inch



Wade historic win at the US Open

AND IN THE ARTS...

- Cecil Day Lewis became Poet Laureate, a post vacant since death of John Masefield in 1967
- The musical Hair premiered in Britain, after abolition of stage censorship by the Lord Chamberlain
- The Forsyte Saga drew huge audiences for the new BBC2
- The Death of Us Part (BBC) was the most popular television show with 15.1 million viewers
- At the Oscars, Katharine Hepburn (The Lion in Winter) and Barbra Streisand (Funny Girl) shared the best actress award. Oliver was best film
- Alexander Solzhenitsyn's novels smuggled out of Russia
- Best-selling albums included Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, Dublin by Tom Jones, Opium's Not Gone, Flamingo by the Small Faces, Val Doonican Rocks Me Gently, The Sound of Music, Bookends by Simon and Garfunkel, and Love Andy by Andy Williams

SPORT

- Britain won five gold medals at the Olympic Games in Mexico
- England and Yorkshire lost bowler "Terry" Fred Trueman announced his retirement
- Virginia Wade beat Billie Jean King to become first British woman to win US Open
- Tony Jacklin became first English golfer to win a tournament on the US tour — the Jacksonville Open — for more than 20 years



Armstrong's story about retiring

QUOTES OF THE YEAR: "I shall not seek and I will not accept the nomination of my party as President," Lyndon Johnson

"He's a look ahead, I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see the River Tiber flowing with much blood," Snook Powell

"Musicians don't retire, they stop when there is no more music in them," Louis Armstrong

"It is unbearably hot, a continual toad-badly," Pope John Paul II

"Let us begin by committing ourselves to the truth; to see if the truth is and to tell it like it is, to find the truth, to speak the truth and live with the truth. That's what we'll do," Richard Nixon's acceptance speech for presidential nomination

ARRIVALS

- Lisa Marie Presley
- Jay Ray
- David Batty
- Damon Albarn
- Jason Donovan and Kylie Minogue

DEPARTURES

- Robert Kennedy
- End Boyer
- Martin Luther King
- Yusef Karam
- John Steinhilber
- Bud Flanagan

Minister quit over 'that bitch' Barbara Castle

DETAILS of the resignation of Ray Gunter, Harold Wilson's minister of power, reveal "extraordinary tensions and class warfare that were rife inside the Cabinet."

Mr Gunter quit as a minister in a late-night telephone call to Mr Wilson at Chequer, claiming he could not stand "the middle-class bastards" inside the Cabinet.

His main target, however, was "that bitch" Barbara Castle, now Baroness — Castle who had been given a version of his old job as Minister for Labour in a reshuffle three months before. He could not understand why she had landed his job and clearly resentment had built up. Last night Lady Castle was not available to comment on the acrimony.

Mr Gunter, one of the lesser-known ministers of the Wilson era, spoke frankly to the PM in a highly emotional call at 11pm on June 29 which was listened into and noted by the Downing Street Duty Clerk. The nature of his bitterness is recorded for the first time in new files at the public record office.

Mr Gunter told Wilson he was walking out of the Government "to fight against the bloody middle class and intellectuals within the Cabinet".

A South Wales valleys boy with strong union links — he was the only minister on strike in 1966 — he hated the government's approach to the Nationalised Industries and

Labour relations generally. Still hankering after his old job, he did not think Mrs Castle was doing it properly and he "could not stomach this".

His mood had no doubt blackened throughout the day. He had tried to resign at 10am that morning but Wilson refused to accept it. But conversing through the duty clerk, he was adamant he would not stay on in the post, and refused to go and see the Prime Minister at Chequer.

The duty clerk recorded that Gunter spoke "in a brusque, almost strangled voice".

Wilson asked if they could remain personal friends but Gunter said there was no friendship. He accused Wilson of destroying the Ministry of Labour and of destroying him, of "kicking him hard" and of suspecting him of leaks. "You suspect me! Torture me!" he railed and said he wanted to know why he had been kicked out of his job.

Gunter said he intended "going back to the people whence I came", adding "where the miners are, the stumbers are and the railwaymen are, that is where I am". Wilson told him to have a stiff drink and sleep on it but he resigned the next day.

Publicly Gunter made no reference of his disagreement with Wilson but he told reporters "they will be asking you the hell I am in ten years' time."



Gunter resented his job going to Castle in Cabinet shuffle



Plus ça change in politics

By Philip Howard

BEHIND the public face of government lie paranoia, secrecy, malice and panic. They always have. And the public records of 1968 show that old Labour was much the same as new Labour (and Conservatives of whatever age) in its cruelties and class wars, with their vendettas and projects.

So we overhear Ray Gunter grumbling about "middle-class bastards" in the Cabinet, anticipating John Major on some of his colleagues. Gunter also called Barbara Castle "that bitch". His observations were gratefully provided to posterity not by a television microphone which he thought

was off the record, but by the official telephone exchange.

That summer the Government dithered a second devaluation, which would have finished it. We hear of Operation Brutus, a plan (described, of course, by economists) to prevent Britons from holidaying abroad, and to stop French wines being imported. George Brown walked out of the Cabinet in a fit of pique, and the Prime Minister was so terrified at the threat to his Government that he made 17 drafts of the customarily disingenuous letter accepting resignation.

It was the high tide of the Sixties, with hippies, marches

and protests against the Vietnam War. The Archbishop of Canterbury opined that the Remembrance Day parade had become out of date. The young seemed such peaceniks that Dr Ramsey suggested a service of universal penitence.

The human weaknesses behind stately facades should be no surprise. They have made rattling good fiction from Sir Humphrey Appleby to Dickens. In his own version of Operation Brutus, Shakespeare made immortal the mixture between public statesmanship and private folly. It comes as a cheerful reminder that our Caesars are like the rest of us.

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The best reads for the new year



THE SATURDAY TIMES ONLY 50P

Whelan truly lost in the big mole hunt



Looking for the right Charlie Allardye yesterday

Jason Allardye finds the high road is a cold trail in the aftermath of Mandelson

THE SPIN-DOCTOR who prides himself on being just a mobile phone call away from journalists was last night successfully evading a press manhunt in the Scottish Highlands.

Charlie Whelan, blamed by Downing Street for leaking details of the financial relationship between Peter Mandelson and Geoffrey Robinson which led to the minister's downfall, is believed to be walking in the Cairngorms almost a fortnight after disappearing off the political radar.

Scotland's biggest-selling daily newspaper, the *Daily Record*, carried a "wanted" poster offering a free flight to Whitehall for a drink in Mr Whelan's local, The Red Lion. But people living where clan chiefs and Jacobite rebels fought to decide how their country should be governed, have so far failed to turn him in. The last reported sighting

of Mr Whelan at Westminster was on Thursday, December 17, four days before the story broke about Geoffrey Robinson's £372,000 home loan to Peter Mandelson. The former Communist was spotted in the evening in the press-gallery bar, drinking his trademark white-wine spritzers.

That was also the day that Mr Mandelson, then Trade and Industry Secretary, alerted Downing Street and the Whitehall machine that the story was about to blow. Since then, the usually ubiquitous Mr Whelan has vanished, first going to ground in London and then apparently retreating to Scotland with friends. In calmer times, there are

few more scrupulous than the Chancellor's press secretary at returning telephone calls. But since the start of the Mandelson affair, hundreds of messages left on his radio pager have gone unanswered. Callers are told: "Charlie Whelan is unavailable until the fourth of January." His mobile phone is turned off.

Some friends suggested that he was more likely to be away from the Cairngorms and delving in the notion of reporters scouring the Highlands for him. "He'll probably turn up next week and declare that he's been somewhere else the whole time," said a friend who had not been in contact with him for more than a week.

Another source close to the Chancellor said that he believed Mr Whelan had been unfairly fingered for the leak, that no minister's camp was "perfect", and that he had been in the Cairngorms around Christmas, but was probably elsewhere now. Another suggestion is that Mr Brown sheltered the embattled assistant at his own home in Queensberry for a spell to help keep him out of the public eye. A spokesman for the Treasury said that Mr Whelan had left London last Tuesday for Scotland, as he had last year. His paging message simply stated that he would be unavailable until January 4.

Anyone climbing the treacherous hills of the Cairngorms normally leaves details of any climbing routes with the local police but there was no record of Mr Whelan. Car-hire companies in Inverness, Aberdeen and Edinburgh also drew a blank. There are more than 100 hotels in the Cairngorms and hundreds more holiday cottages. Aviemore was bustling with New Year revellers last night but there was no sign of Mr Whelan.

At the Red McGregor Hotel, the manager passed a hand-

written note that it was company policy for local staff not to speak to journalists. Drinkers there had mixed views of Mr Whelan but most believed he had acted fairly if he had indeed "done the dirty" on Mr Mandelson. "We need more down to earth people like that in the Government," said one.

The trail appeared to hot up near Kincaig, a small Speyside village near the still waters of Loch Insh. At the village's Watersports Centre, six miles south of Aviemore, the manager Clive Freshwater confirmed that a Mr Whelan had been staying in a £600-a-week chalet there since Wednesday.

It was the same hideaway where Sir Michael Hirst went in 1997 upon resigning as president of the Scottish Conservative Party after he believed that allegations about his private life were going to be published in a newspaper.

Unfortunately the occupant was a Mr Mark Whelan, who was nothing like the man the *Daily Record*, except that he was unavailable. Mr Freshwater, 59, is a fan of Peter Mandelson as a man who like Margaret Thatcher "got things done and helped business".

As temperatures dipped, the trail ran as cold as the Cairngorms once more.



Whelan: friends say he may enjoy the hunt



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600 x 1200 dpi optical resolution.
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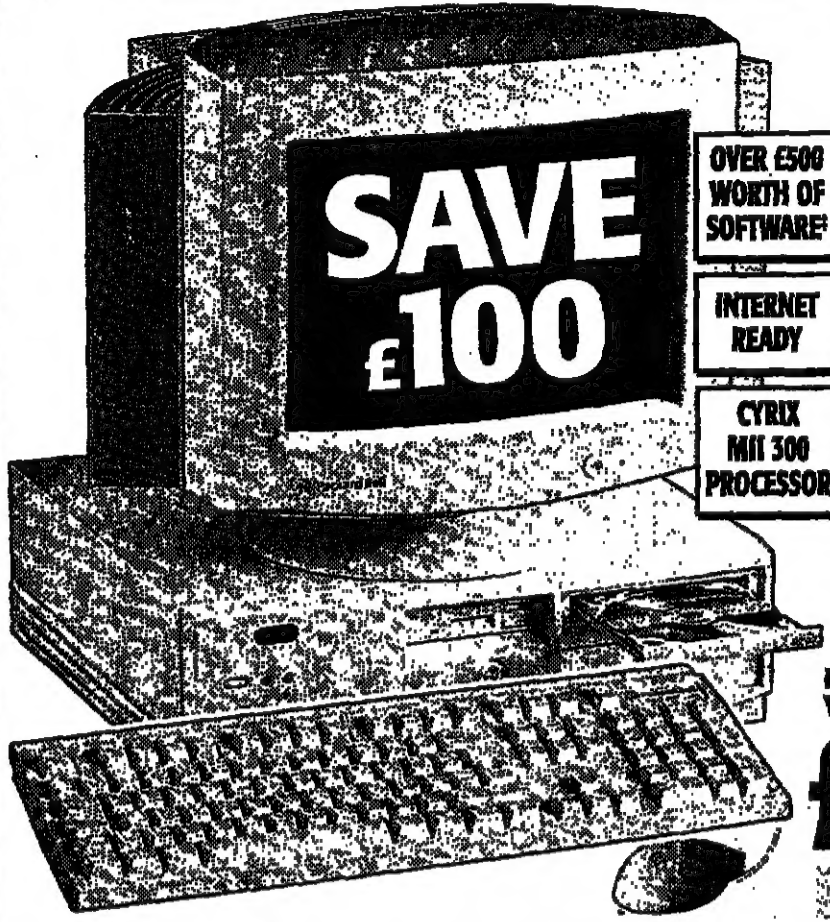
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Hostages forced to change their stories

Daniel McGrory in Aden reports on claims that a Yemeni 'whitewash' seeks to absolve soldiers of blame

SECRET police yesterday forced a survivor of the Yemeni hostage massacre to change his testimony about how his wife died in the bungled rescue attempt, to remove any suggestion that Yemeni troops fired the fatal shot.

Laurence Whitehouse said that he had reluctantly altered his written statement after he and his fellow survivors had been interrogated for several hours.

"I just want to take my wife home to be buried. I don't care what version the Yemenis want to believe," he said.

But Mr Whitehouse dismissed as "pure fiction" the finding of a post-mortem examination carried out in Aden yesterday that his wife, Margaret, had been shot at point-blank range by her captors. Other survivors also spoke of their disgust at the attempted "whitewash" by their rescuers.

David Holmes, who was beside Mrs Whitehouse during the shootout between their captors and security forces, said that he had no doubt that the advancing troops shot her.

"The Yemenis are telling complete and utter lies. And this was a shameful way to treat a man who has just lost his wife," he said.

Before the nine British hostages began their journey home last night they were told to fill in questionnaires from the Yemeni secret police, which included "evaluating the success of the rescue operation". Mr Whitehouse, 54, from Hook, Hampshire, said: "I wrote 'Four dead, 12 survived'. It speaks for itself."

Mr Whitehouse then had to

wait his turn in the stifling restaurant of the hotel at which the survivors had been kept for three days to be cross-examined on his answers. He had written that when his wife fell to the ground with half her face torn away he had shouted to their captors: "You have killed my wife."

"The Yemenis liked that expression but I added 'the bullet could have been anybody's'," he said. "The colonel questioning me did not like that bit and asked me to delete it."

Mr Whitehouse was standing with his hands in the air two yards from his wife, who was nursing Andrew Thirk, another hostage, when Yemeni soldiers charged the ridge on which they were held at gunpoint as human shields.

Trembling as he spoke, Mr Whitehouse said: "They shouldn't be using my wife's death as a political football. The culpability was the terrorists. They kidnapped us, they used us as human shields. There can't be any greater culpability than that."

The issue of who fired the bullet is irrelevant to the loss of her pupils, her hundreds of friends feel. I have lost a wife of 27 years."

Hussain Arab, Yemen's Interior Minister, insisted yesterday that the army was ordered in only after the Al-Jihad kidnappers threatened to execute a hostage every hour.

That contradicted the original claim by General Mohammad Saleh Turaiik, Aden's security chief, that three of the captives were executed before the raid began. The hostages



Holmes: "Yemenis are telling complete lies"

say that they were never threatened.

The general presided over the questioning of the survivors yesterday. He refused to accept a typed statement, agreed by all the survivors, which is believed to be critical of the rescue operation. An aide said that four hostages changed their statements under questioning to say that the terrorists fired first. When questioned by journalists, the group unanimously agreed

that the shooting was too far away to say who fired first.

David Pearce, Britain's deputy ambassador to Yemen, said: "We did not know they were going to use force. We were not consulted and we would never have condoned that use of force." He said Britain was demanding to know why the raid was ordered, as well as a fair trial for the leader of the kidnappers, Abdul Hassan. An FBI investigator arrived in Aden yesterday amid reports that Al-Jihad was funded by Osama Bin Laden, the Saudi billionaire living in Afghanistan who was allegedly behind bombings at US embassies in Africa.

Yemeni opposition leaders claimed that the Government had known before the kidnapping that the 400-strong Al-Jihad was running a terrorist training camp in the area but had done nothing.

Before leaving Aden the survivors visited their injured friends, Margaret Thompson and Claire Marston, whose husband, Peter Rowe, was killed.



Laurence Whitehouse, right, is comforted by Chris Cheeseman, a fellow survivor, as they leave Aden yesterday

Scientists keep an ear open for ET

By Nick Nuttall
TECHNOLOGY
CORRESPONDENT

THE most advanced search for intelligent alien life is to be launched by British and American scientists using the Jodrell Bank radio telescope to screen out interference from the Earth's own radio and television signals.

The scientists will be listening for signals in a band called the "water hole" which lies between 1,420 MHz and 1,600 MHz, or between the frequencies of hydrogen and oxygen. Like a water hole where disparate animals gather, this is the area of frequency where aliens could hope to communicate across the miles of space.

Previous searches have used a single radio telescope to listen for suitable signals. This has led to errors due to interference from spy planes and broadcasts on Earth. Now Jodrell Bank is linking with a Caribbean telescope to allow researchers to dismiss rogue signals more swiftly.

Ian Morison, the engineer and radio astronomer co-ordinating the British end of the research, said that when the Arecibo dish in Puerto Rico picks up a suitable signal, it will be relayed to Jodrell Bank which will be listening on the same bit of sky from Cheshire.

If the signal is really interference from within our solar system, the exact same signal will be detected by both telescopes. If the signal is coming from a solar system far away, the frequency Jodrell Bank detects will be slightly different.

The two telescopes, whose work is being funded by the privately backed SETI Institute in California, have made some preliminary searches. But the Arecibo telescope suffered some damage late last year as a result of Hurricane George.

The real work begins in March. Mr Morison said that he was keeping an open mind about possible findings.



Jodrell Bank able to distinguish ET from TV

NEWS IN BRIEF

Boy falls under van wheels

A boy aged three was critically ill after falling from a van and being run over by the back wheels. Jake Lloyd was with his brother Jordan, 6, in the passenger seat when he opened the door. The van was driven by their cousin, David Weller, 20, who was returning the boys to their home in Reading after a family party. The boy was taken to Great Ormond Street Hospital. Police are to question Mr Weller and the injured boy's brother.

Death charge

Two men were remanded after the death of a boy aged 7, hit by a stolen taxi in West Belfast. Steven Sweeney, 25, and Paul McCusker, 27, were charged with hijacking and Sweeney alone with causing death by dangerous driving.

Omagh concert

The pop group Boyzone are to perform in Omagh this weekend in aid of victims of the bombing atrocity. Members of the chart-topping band will also meet survivors of the blast during their day-long visit to the town tomorrow.

Last journey

A taxi driver and a woman passenger died when the vehicle was crushed by a lorry on the M25 in Buckinghamshire. The woman aged 34 was going from Heathrow to spend New Year's Eve with family in Chorleywood, Hertfordshire.

Ancient saddle

Archaeologists have found a medieval saddle in a dig near the old city walls of Carlisle, Cumbria. The decorated leatherwork, believed to be about 500 years old, was well preserved by the "waterlogged" ditch in which it was found.

£800,000 tome

A famous 17th century book on flowers, *The Flower Florilegium*, which had been lost for nearly 150 years, is expected to fetch up to £800,000 at Christie's in London in March. It contains more than 200 flower paintings on vellum.

Gecko discovery

A British student has discovered a new species of gecko during a trip to the South Pacific. Julia Jones, 21, an ecology student at Cambridge University, found the 16cm-long lizard among rocks on Mont Igambé in New Caledonia.



Surprisingly ordinary prices



EUROPE'S NEW CURRENCY

Bubbly and balloons for the EU baby

FROM CHARLES BREMNER
IN BRUSSELS

IN KEEPING with the seasonal spirit, a jolly cartoon stork was used by the European Union yesterday to herald the arrival of the baby euro, along with the new year.

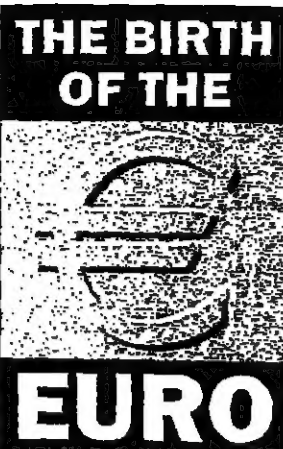
But the Brussels ceremony smacked far more of a wedding, replete with champagne, emotion, forced speeches, poor jokes and a family spat.

There was a nuptial feel about the solemn yet festive manner in which ministers, the British ambassador, the Commission President and the Central Bank governor gathered in the pink granite palace of the EU Council to confer their collective blessing on monetary union.

After all the years of rehearsal, sacrifice and bickering, the relief was palpable when the ministers, in the role of best men, popped the corks of their salmagundi bottles of champagne and toasted the mass matrimony of the lira, escudo, peseta, three national francs, two marks, guilder, schilling and the Irish pound.

A little over-emotional, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the Brussels Monetary Commissioner, shocked the guests by threatening to spray them with bubbly in the style of a victorious Formula One driver.

Outside in the courtyard, children, decked from head to foot in the blue and gold of the European flag, counted down from dix, neuf, huit... to un and released 3,000 balloons into the grey Brussels sky for



the benefit of the television cameras.

"This shows everything is going to become prosperous," said Jean-Louis Fourmy, the man from the Brussels balloon firm, who complained that he had been charged a special balloon-launching tax by the Belgian authorities.

In the distance, a gaggle of anti-euro demonstrators from The Netherlands chanted their disapproval of the single currency.

But first had come the euro ritual, in which the officials calculated the rates at which the 11 currencies would lock together and dissolve themselves into the new at midnight. The rates were disclosed when Jacques Santer, the President of the Commission, in an avuncular mood, pulled a curtain from an illuminated scoreboard. The Italians shed an arithmetical tear

as 1,936.27 lire became a single euro.

Like all weddings, the vicar, in the shape of Wim Duisenberg, the dry-humoured Governor of the European Central Bank, reminded the congregation that the union was irreversible. Then followed the oratory, in which the ministers competed with lofty metaphors to convey the emotion of the occasion.

"We are standing at the dawn of a new era in history," said Rudolf Eisinger, the Austrian Finance Minister and the outgoing EU finance chairman, setting the tone.

Minister after minister invoked history and added a national twist. Carlo Ciampi, for Italy, gave a taste of Rome's relief that the lira had not been jilted. "Italian money is no longer national. Today it becomes European," he beamed, adding that Italy now wants even closer union.

The Finnish minister spoke of his country's joy at being part of the euro union. Like the rich father of a bride espousing a poorer partner, the Germans sounded warnings on the need for thrift and effort, adding a swipe at Britain on fiscal misbehaviour. The effect was diminished by the fact that the sermon was delivered by Werner Müller, the Economy Minister, in the absence of Oskar Lafontaine, the Finance Minister, who preferred to stay home with his family.

Denmark, which is staying out of the euro, surprised the gathering when its minister proclaimed her conviction it



European Union finance ministers and officials mark the unveiling in Brussels yesterday of the fixed rates of currencies against the euro

would soon join. Portugal was thrilled to be part of a monetary giant, its minister said.

True to form, France offered the most lyrical address. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the minister, invoked the dreams of Victor Hugo and ended "Vive La France en Europe!" Also keeping wedding tradition, "Uncle" Jacques Santer paid homage to the euro's illustrious but absent grandparents, in the form of Jacques Delors, the former Commission Presi-

dent, the late François Mitterrand of France and Helmut Kohl, the former German Chancellor.

Britain, the troublesome outsider at the festivities, offered a characteristically jarring note when Sir Stephen Wall, the Ambassador to the EU, eschewed the historic tone in favour of a questionable joke. Tony Blair, he recalled, had presided over the "longest lunch in the history of the EU" when the leaders had squab-

bled over the appointment of Mr Duisenberg at their Brussels summit last May.

Yesterday's euro lunch had been one of the shortest, Sir Stephen said. "Perhaps we can converge on a central rate for lunches in the EU," he added, producing strained laughter. Sir Stephen declared: "We wish it every success."

The euro family rift came from the sparring match between Mr Duisenberg and France. The Dutchman has up-

set Paris by proclaiming this week he has no intention of stepping down after only four years in the eight-year post at the bank in favour of a Frenchman. The arrangement was brokered by Mr Blair in March as a way of appeasing President Chirac's desire to have the job immediately for his country. Mr Duisenberg again asserted his independence yesterday, however, earning a stinging riposte from M Strauss-Kahn, who said

Mr Duisenberg would be breaking his solemn promise. **Rome:** The Italian Government presided over the minting of its first euro coins yesterday, but Rome postal workers spoiled the festive launch by announcing a strike in protest at being inadequately equipped to work with the currency.

Paul Sykes, page 16
Leading article
Letters, page 17
Business News, page 40

Praise for Briton who charted currency course

THE oddest sight at yesterday's ceremonies to launch the euro was of a senior, but largely unknown, British civil servant, being offered a standing ovation by all the finance ministers of euroland (Charles Bremner writes).

Sir Nigel Wicks, 58, the Treasury's international director, was being hailed for his outstanding work over five years as chairman of the EU monetary committee, the secretive body of national officials that has led the technical preparations for the euro.

Since 1993 Sir Nigel, who is standing down this month and who was awarded the

MAN WHO MADE IT HAPPEN

GCB in the New Year Honours, has earned the esteem of EU finance ministers with his skill in steering the project through the uncharted waters leading to its creation.

The paradox of a British official at the helm of the finance committee has long worn off in the EU world, where he has wielded great influence in the decisions that shaped the euro.

Sir Nigel, who guards his privacy with the tenacity of the model Whitehall man, became a power in the EU after helping John Major to negotiate Britain's opt-out from mon-

etary union at the Maastricht summit in 1991. Since 1993 the Cambridge graduate and former BP executive has commuted regularly to Brussels and other EU capitals from his home in Guildford, attracting little public recognition except for his nomination last autumn in a much-publicised list of the 300 most influential people in Britain.

Although seen initially as a Eurosceptic, Sir Nigel took to the nuts and bolts of building the single currency with such enthusiasm that French, German and other officials have treated him not as an agent of

the outside camp, but as one of their own. "He has made damned sure this thing works," said a senior French official.

Yesterday, Sir Nigel blushed and looked at the table when Rudolf Eisinger, the Austrian chairman of the finance ministers' council, said: "On behalf of the council, I want to express our admiration and deeply-felt gratitude. Thank you very much Sir Nigel Wicks." The council broke into spontaneous applause. German speakers noted that Sir Nigel was the only participant whom Herr Eisinger had not addressed with the intimate *Du*, sticking with the formal *Sie*.



Wicks: led preparations for monetary union

Regular travellers will enjoy benefits of new bank accounts

MANY banks have launched euro accounts already in response to customer demand (Karen Woolson writes). People who will benefit from opening a euro bank account are those who travel regularly within euroland whether on business or for pleasure. European property owners may also benefit from a euro bank account. Shares: Holding shares on the Continent may be easier with a euro bank account. Anyone with a connection in euroland, such as family in Spain, or who plans to retire or study somewhere in the zone could

INVESTMENT

also benefit from opening a euro account. **Credit cards:** Transactions on credit cards and debit cards in euroland will be quoted both in the euro and in the local currency. **Cash:** Cash: Bank has just launched a euro-denominated Visa card in conjunction with a euro bank account. The card allows customers to pay in the new currency without incurring any foreign exchange transaction charges. **Euro-friendly:** plastic cards and accounts are expected to become commonplace within

the first year of the euro's inception. **Dual pricing:** From today the local currency of each participating country will be fixed to the euro. So if, for example, you drive to the French Riviera and then go to the Dordogne the week after, the exchange rate between the euro and the French franc should not vary at any point during your holiday. **Price comparisons:** It will be easier to remember one exchange rate (the euro against sterling) rather than the 11 different local exchange rates around euroland that eventually will disappear anyway.

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هكذا من الإلهام

Numbers game hits City screens

Petra Roth, Mayor of Frankfurt, has been lobbying hard to make her city competitive with London as a financial centre. Her marketing slogan is: "Frankfurt's not large, but it's great". The euro celebration suggests that the City of London needn't be too nervous. Fran Roth will be watching the party television — she saw no reason to come back from holiday for the launch celebration.

Despite the new left-wing tide across Europe, Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor, and his cabinet have left their partners in no doubt that Bonn aims to use its turn at the EU helm to assert German interests, especially over EU finances. Setting the tone for a presidency packed with deadlines for reform, German ministers hailed the birth of the single currency as a leap to a new

The German insistence on bringing tax rates closer into line

Currency strategist Jane Foley: "Most people are expecting the euro to strengthen, but I don't agree"

And it was a dull New

Barclays Capital, where about 200 employees will work through the weekend, has booked 80 hotel rooms and will keep its canteen running round the clock.

It is likely to push for a German one of these posts but no plausible names are in circulation. Because farmers have held the top Brussels posts in recent years, the current favourites for Commission President are southern politicians, including former Romano Prodi and Lamberto Dini, both former Italian Prime Ministers, and Antonio Guterres, the Portuguese Prime Minister.

Correction: what Germany wants done to its £8 billion EU membership bill.

Setting the tone for a presidency packed with deadlines for reform, German ministers hailed the birth of the single currency as a leap to a new

The German insistence on bringing tax rates closer into line jars with

While no one is seeking uniform rates, the Germans, with backing from France and most of the other nine states in euroland, are determined to end the big discrepancies between tax regimes on business profits, savings income and energy use. Their first target is to close European "tax oases" such as Luxembourg and

The break with the conciliatory style of Helmut Kohl and other past German leaders is setting the scene for fights over imminent big EU decisions. Rather than brokering compromise on common ground, Bonn is not flinching from stirring up trouble. The chief area is the new six-year spending plan, a fiendishly complicated package that will encompass re-

Born is likely to push for a German to fill one of these posts but no plausible names are in circulation. Because northerners have held the top Brussels jobs in recent years, the current favourites for Commission President are southern politicians, including Professor Romano Prodi and Lamberto Dini, both former Italian Prime Ministers, and Antonio Guterres, the Portuguese Prime Minister.

Clintons escape and hope the tide will turn

TOSSING a ball for Buddy, President Clinton strolled on the beach during a brief respite from his impeachment woes.

As his labrador romped in the surf, the President — in tracksuit and baseball cap — chatted to friendly tourists. Earlier his motorcade had driven past small groups of protesters, including one holding a large sign that said: "Feel our pain — resign now."

The Clintons are seeing in the new year as usual at the up-market resort of Hilton Head, off the coast of South Carolina. They have joined a crowd of other high achievers assembled for the annual off-the-record Renaissance Weekend.

One bright spot for the family was that Chelsea Clinton accompanied her parents to the retreat, contrary to a statement from the White House press office that she would not attend. In tacit admission of their troubles, Mr Clinton and his wife Hillary were not asked to conduct the question-and-answer session on New Year's Eve as in years past, at

Ian Brodie reports from Washington on new moves in Senate to avoid a full trial

which the impeachment issue was sure to have been raised.

"I thought there were more important things for them to address, so I didn't hassle them about it," said the Renaissance organiser, Linda Le-Sourd Lader, wife of Phil Lader, US Ambassador to Britain.

To add to the Clintons' embarrassment, Americans doing their weekend shopping will see a blaring tabloid headline at supermarket checkout counters: "Hillary Beats Up Bill". This is the report in the *National Enquirer* that an infuriated Mrs Clinton, broken by the strain of her husband's womanising, hit him so hard

that she left a visible mark on his face and Secret Service agents had to separate them.

Despite the widespread visibility of the account, the White House press office continued to have no comment yesterday. Still, Mr and Mrs Clinton could take comfort that they remain top of Gallup's annual "most admired" poll of Americans and by a higher percentage than last year. He was named by 18 per cent of those surveyed, up from 14 per cent, and Mrs Clinton's rating doubled from 14 to 28 per cent. The Pope and Oprah Winfrey were runners-up.

While the Clintons were enjoying sunshine among old friends, snow was falling in Washington. The political climate, however, may be turning slightly less chilly. A paper was circulating in the Senate suggesting a swift test vote on whether the perjury and obstruction of justice charges against Mr Clinton warrant his removal from office.

Under this plan, prosecutors from the House Judiciary Committee would make a



President Clinton and his dog Buddy stroll on the beach at Hilton Head, South Carolina, where the presidential family is spending new year

brief presentation to the Senate followed by a White House rebuttal. Senators would then be asked to vote on whether the allegations, if true, would justify removing the President.

The idea is that the vote would prevent a long trial by demonstrating that the Republicans could not muster the 67 votes needed to dismiss Mr Clinton. The Senate would then take up

the proposal to reprimand him. Averting a trial did not sit well with Henry Hyde, the Republican chairman of the house committee, who said that the Senate's duty should

not be short-circuited: "We must not act so hastily that the Senate does not have a fair opportunity to review a factual record."

On the flight to South Caroli-

na, Mr Clinton ambled to the rear of Air Force One to collar Buddy. Reporters asked if he had made any new year's resolutions. "I'm working on it," the President said.

'Mayor for life' leaves with no regrets

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON



Barry: enjoyed life while Washington suffered

TOMORROW will be a day that many in Washington thought would never come — the moment Marion Barry finally steps down as Mayor of the American capital.

Once known as "mayor for life", Mr Barry, 62, was a disaster during most of the 16 years he held the job.

He padded the city payroll with thousands of patronage jobs, was incapable of fixing the simplest of municipal chores, and gained notoriety when an FBI sting caught him smoking crack.

Mr Barry was a night owl who cruised the city's clubs with his police bodyguards. He took junkies overseas. His name was linked to a variety of women. And all the while city services grew worse.

Eventually, Congress and President Clinton stripped him of power. Using their authority over the federal district, they created a control board to tackle the morass, including budget deficits, a dysfunctional city hall, inept schools and a scandal-prone police force. The board pulled

the city back from the brink and now its former chief financial officer, Anthony Williams, will be taking over as Mayor.

Mr Barry saw no evil at his final, wistful, press conference. "I've been a good mayor," he said. "I have no regrets." He vowed to write an autobiography to "tell my side of history". Authorities have begun an investigation into whether tens of thousands of dollars of city money were diverted to pay for a gala to celebrate Mr Barry's tenure.

US closes embassy in Tel Aviv

Jerusalem: The US Embassy in Israel was closed yesterday after an anonymous warning that a bomb would be detonated inside the offices in Tel Aviv (Ross Dunn writes). Edward Walker, the ambassador, ordered the closure on US security service recommendations. It is thought that an attack may have been planned by militant Islamic groups because of the US and British bombings of Iraq.

Mir comrades break open the cognac to wish the worldwell

FROM ANNA BLUNDY IN MOSCOW

COSMONAUTS on the Mir space station will be celebrating the new year — Russia's most important holiday — around a miniature artificial tree 250 miles above the earth. This will be Sergei Avdeyev's third new year in space, and New Year's Day is both his 43rd birthday and his 500th day in orbit. He and Gennadi Padalka are not due to return to Earth until the end

of February at the earliest. Their tiny, decorated tree will add an air of seasonal splendour to the pair's New Year's Day satellite address. They will also have a midnight two-way celebratory link-up with their families to detract from the extreme isolation of life in space.

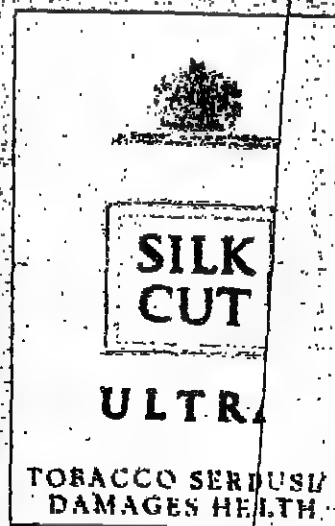
But Valeri Lyadina, of the Flight Control Centre, says the two men will not be able to raise the traditional glass of Russian champagne to their loved ones because carbonat-

ed drinks are forbidden. "The little bubbles at out and get everywhere," says Theoretically, he adds, the men will not be drinking any alcohol at all.

In reality, it is new year and the crew Russian. In February 1998 astronauts on Mir were agitated to see their Russian colleagues breaking out the cognac after successfully putting out a fire on board. It is a fly kept secret that the Russians have drunk cognac in space since 1977.

JANUARY

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THINK 0

Son sues rail firm over Auschwitz

A JEWISH Frenchman whose parents were deported by train and murdered at Auschwitz in the Second World War is suing the state-owned French railway for alleged "crimes against humanity".

French railworkers of the Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer (SNCF) have been celebrated as Resistance fighters. But the lawsuit launched by Jean-Jacques Fraenkel, the first of his kind, has questioned that heroic image by claiming that the rail company collaborated in the deportations to Nazi death camps.

M. Fraenkel is already suing the State for "receiving stolen goods" — valuables taken from his parents — but he has extended the suit to include SNCF, which was nationalised in 1938. He claims that his father, a surgeon and holder of the Légion d'honneur, and mother, who became a Resistance worker, were taken to the death camps in French trains and the state rail company "collaborated in the deportations without any individual

The French state railway is accused of collaborating in wartime deaths, writes Ben Macintyre in Paris

or collective act of opposition". M. Fraenkel, 67, who also holds Canadian citizenship, acknowledges that individual railworkers performed acts of great heroism during the war, but he insists that the company did nothing to prevent the deportation of French Jews.

There were, it is true, railworkers who were deported and shot, SNCF employees who resisted. But it should not be forgotten that there were hundreds of trains which transported Jews like so much freight to the concentration camps," M. Fraenkel said. "It must be officially recognised that the SNCF was one of the tools used by the Nazis to exterminate 80,000 French Jews."

The judge examining M. Fraenkel's claims against the State is also likely to take over the complaint against SNCF

which could face an avalanche of similar claims from Holocaust victims. "The SNCF knew the intolerable conditions these people faced on the cattle trains," M. Fraenkel said, pointing out that the company's bureaucrats organised the train convoys.

Roger Fraenkel, M. Fraenkel's father, was among 743 wealthy Jews taken to Auschwitz in 1941, soon after the Nazi occupation of France.

His mother fled to Nice, but was betrayed and sent to Auschwitz in 1943, leaving M. Fraenkel and his younger sister as orphans. The family apartment was looted under the anti-Jewish legislation.

"By operating trains of deported Jews using French staff, the SNCF took part alongside the French administration and other private com-

panies, in a crime against humanity," M. Fraenkel alleges in a lawsuit which the Paris prosecutor's office confirmed was "unprecedented".

The French railworker or chemist enjoys an almost mythical status. That is likely to be shattered if M. Fraenkel proves that the company and its wartime staff played a role in one of the worst crimes in history.

□ Vietnam: Holocaust survivor Simon Wiesenthal, who helped to track down and bring to justice 1,100 Nazi war criminals, celebrated his 90th birthday here yesterday with his wife Cyla and daughter Pauline.

Mr Wiesenthal was born in Buczacz, now in Ukraine, in 1908 and during the second world war was interned in a dozen Nazi German concentration camps before being liberated from Mauthausen in Austria by US troops in 1945.

After the war he started his pursuit of former Nazi war criminals from his Jewish Documentation Centre, (AFP)



Father Giuseppe Puglisi, who was shot dead in 1983 outside his home in a poor district of Palermo, Sicily. The Vatican announced yesterday that the priest, who was a suspected Mafia victim, will be beatified during a ceremony this year

Papal blessings to cost 25% more

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE Vatican said yesterday that it was increasing by a quarter today the cost of the special papal blessings that are sold under licence to pilgrims in authorised shops around St Peter's Square in order to be able to devote more funds to the poor.

Archbishop Oscar Rizzuto, head of the Apostolic Sales Office which helps the Pope to minister to the poor, said the Holy See hopes that the increased price to the shops, 5,000 lire (£1.80) instead of 4,000 lire, would be borne by the retailers so that pilgrims do not have to pay extra for the spiritual souvenirs.

"The increase was decided because of the growing difficulty of coping with the ever greater number of poor people who ask for help from the Holy Father," he said.

The blessings are sold in the form of certificates bearing a picture of the Pope. Counter prices range from 18,000 lire upwards.

NEWS IN BRIEF

America to resume China rights talks

Beijing: America is to resume human rights dialogue with China, it was announced yesterday, despite Beijing's crackdown on dissent. The dialogue, discontinued in 1995, will resume based on initiatives from last year's summit between Presidents Jiang Zemin and Clinton, said a US Embassy spokesman in Beijing. In recent days, China has punished four high-profile democracy activists with stiff prison sentences and Ma Zhe, a dissident poet, was jailed for seven years on subversion charges.

The embassy would not comment on whether specific cases of jailed dissidents would be raised, only stating that "the agenda for the talks is still being negotiated". A Chinese delegation will travel to Washington to resume the talks. (AFP)

UN Angola staff leave

Luanda: The United Nations has started evacuating its staff from Huambo, Angola's second-largest city, after a rebel artillery barrage that killed at least eight people. The international Red Cross said 20 wounded civilians were admitted to hospital after an hour-long bombardment of the city by UNITA's long-range artillery. Thousands of refugees fleeing fighting in the countryside have converged on Huambo in recent weeks. (AP)

Australia wanted Bomb

Canberra: Australia, a vocal opponent of nuclear weapons proliferation, considered building up to 50 atomic bombs a year as recently as 1968, according to declassified Cabinet documents released by the National Archives. They show that John Gorton's conservative Government supported the principle of non-proliferation during the United Nations treaty debate as long as it did not block Australia's options to build a bomb at some stage. (AP)

Mob injures four nuns

Delhi: A boy takes part in a demonstration in the Indian capital against attacks on Christians and churches in the western state of Gujarat, where four nuns and two priests were earlier injured when mobs attacked a Catholic prayer hall. The attack was the tenth on the Christian community since Christmas Day, officials said. Christian activists blame Hindu extremists, but no one has claimed responsibility for the violence. (Reuters)

Child killings arrest

Bogotá: Colombia has reported the capture of Pedro Pablo Ramirez, suspected of murdering 29 children whose bodies were found in November in two ditches in the city of Pereira. Investigators were also trying to determine if he was involved in other murders of children that have taken place in recent years, officials said. Señor Ramirez was arrested using a false name in Pereira, 195 miles east of Bogotá. (AFP)

Bosnian Serb choice

Banja Luka: In an attempt to end a political deadlock, President Poplasen of Republika Srpska, the Bosnian Serb territory, named Brane Milijus, right, a moderate, as Prime Minister-designate after a hardliner failed to win parliamentary approval. Mr Milijus is a member of the pro-Western Party of Independent Social Democrats run by Milorad Dodik, the current Prime Minister. The parliament must approve Mr Milijus. (AP)

Rebels beaten back

Freetown: West African peacekeepers beat back a rebel attack on the outskirts of the Sierra Leonean capital, Freetown, driving them from the garrison town of Hastings, a spokesman for the peacekeeping force said. Residents fleeing the town, 12 miles from the impoverished former British colony's capital, said that the rebels had attacked overnight. Earlier, the Government denied that rebels were in control of the northern region. (Reuters)

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As warm as a pickled pepper



Slope off in style and comfort: Snow + Rock has concentrated on a range of snug and sensible suits, and the pink Killy, £379, is a classic

There is something intensely comforting about skiing with a group of friends who wear the same ski-gear every year. Since we last skied together, bombs have been dropped, politicians have encountered banana skins and trauma has gripped the City, but as we head for the first lift in Val-d'Isère next week, we will look pretty much the same as we did last January. It is like entering a loop in which time stands still.

Displaying scant regard for the vagaries of sporting fashion is also a good excuse for making a ski-suit last at least a decade (as the Prince of Wales has obviously concluded). No one would be able to pick you out on the slopes if you changed hue, you claim, so why swap the battered burgundy one-piece for something less faded? The chums are an obliging lot and at least one of them will slap you warmly on the back and insist that they wouldn't recognise you in any other colour.

So you put to the back of your mind the obvious truth that there

Warm, windproof, long-lasting — and good for posing. Penny Wark searches for the perfect ski suit

are two ways to recognise friends at a million paces. I prefer to think that it is my soignée appearance that makes me identifiable, but secretly I know that it is skiing style (or lack of it) that enables companions to pick me out from 50 others hurtling down La Grande Motte. Colour is the secondary factor.

Nevertheless, it is with some reluctance that I have come to accept that the Head suit bought on impulse during a former life is past its prime. The moment of truth came last year when I realised that in spite of vests (one sleeveless, one long-sleeved), long johns (two pairs) and all manner of poloneck tops, I was still numb with cold. I invested £70 in a delicious Elder fleece top and matching long johns, which could not have been tastier (I have been wearing them at home ever since), but even these did not remove the need for a warmer outer layer.

The search began for something warm, windproof and waterproof, and with a reasonable pose factor thrown in. I wanted a one-piece, because, inconvenient as they are at lunchtime, they are extremely snug and, unlike jacket and trousers, they don't ever come apart.

I was also looking for a tall collar that would, when zipped up, come halfway up my face, sleeves that fall below my wrists, pockets to take credit cards and tissues without spoiling the line of the suit, and a rescue reflector. All that and a neat, simple design in a colour that will endure another decade without looking completely tragic.

If only it were that easy. I rapidly discovered that many of this year's suits fall into two categories: vile colours (do you really want to look like a banana?) and the pseudo-sporty effect that threatens to make you look like a teenager on heat. It is a look that is seriously incomplete

without a cavalier disregard for other skiers, and the ability to grunt "Dunno, wasn't me" — or "I've dropped my gloves off the lift" at five-minute intervals. Not for grown-ups, in my view.

This is one of the traps that C & A has tumbled into this season. It may be famous for its skiwear but its current range will satisfy only youths or those, possibly with a fondness for *Saturday Night Fever*, who like to ski in Lurex. This, I admit, had never occurred to me.

But persevere and you discover that Snow + Rock has concentrated on snug and sensible suits — the Killy one-piece in pink (£379) is a classic, and I was particularly taken by the purse slotted on to its belt. The snag is the colour range: if you choose white, what happens when you lose a chunk of oil-drenched *chèvre chaud* down your front at

the first lunch? You buy another suit presumably. The same goes for a fabulous cream suit by Belle, trimmed in fake fur, at £329.

Tenson has a simple black suit at £269, and Brugi a red one with a fleece collar at a remarkable £129. But too many of this year's women's suits are laden with faux gold buckles and fastenings, and even fur.

At Lillywhites I was melting with desire at the sight of Bogner's exquisite ice blue one-piece, with its fur collar and cuffs, until an assistant explained that they were silver fox, which apparently justified the £1,500 price. I will learn to live without it on both counts.

I found my suit at Canyon Mountain Sports in Leicester. By Trespas, it is simple, warm, has a grey fleece collar and, at £99.99, was such good value that I felt obliged to ask what was wrong with it.

For my friends' information, it is red. "You look like a tomato," said one of the teenagers. When they grow up and learn to be tactful, they will realise that "red hot chili pepper" would be much more polite.

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FAKE FUR HAT, £15

High quality fake fur is and warm, and the f keep ears at La Maison de la Fausse Four at Fenwick, New Bond Street, (0171-629 93 9)



SKI SOCK, £15.95

Thermast fibres give extra warmth, padding protects shins, and acrylic and Spandex enhances moisture ventilation. Thorlo (ref: plum EASAXP) available at Snow + Rock (mail order 0845 0841000) 8/10



THERM UNDERWEAR, £15

An excellent first is for keeping out the cold. Long-sleeved top thermal top and pa have a soft fleece lining which is incredibly warm. Marks & Spencer (01 935 441 10/10)

FLEECE TOP, £39

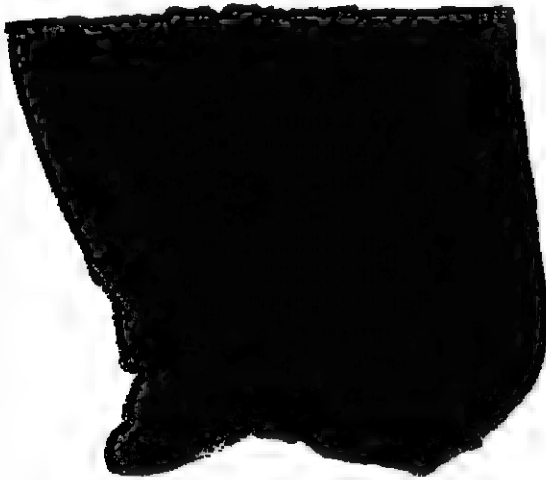
Fine fleece that keeps you warm without adding extra bulk. Doubles as a tracksuit top for lounging around after skiing. Elder (ref: lemon CEJFY), at Snow + Rock as before 10/10

CASHMERE SCARF, plain £39 or knitted £55

Larger size wraps amply around the neck and chin, or can be wrapped stole. Made from 100 per cent cashmere, it is beautiful. Bora, 344 Kings Road, St. (0171-736 8888)

Objects of desire

Keep your feet toasty with these knitted sock slippers. They come in frosty shades of sage and blue and can be worn under the sheets if your bed is cold, or as an alternative to the nasty nylon freebies you get on aircraft. £16 from The Cross Catalogue (0171-221 8616)



This incredibly soft and chunky cashmere blanket may be pricey, but as indulgences go, it ranks with the best. Folding neatly in on itself to form a pillow, it is blissful for travelling or for snuggling up on the sofa. £415 by Camire, available from MIMI, 309 Kings Road, SW3 (0171-637 1450)



D.B.



D.B.

HOT TIP

For a complete winter wardrobe, look no further than the Snow + Rock collection. It's the perfect blend of style and functionality, designed to keep you warm and comfortable on the slopes. The collection includes a range of ski suits, gloves, hats, and socks, all made from high-quality materials. Snow + Rock is a brand that has built a reputation for its winter wear, and this collection is no exception. It's a must-have for anyone who loves skiing or winter sports.

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Zen and the art of blading

Mary Ann Sieghart promotes a perfect form of transport

For weeks I wobbled. Within a month I was motoring. Now a whole year has passed, and I am almost an expert. It was for Christmas 1997 that my husband gave me a pair of Rollerblades. And ever since, I have enjoyed a lasting enthusiasm that happens also to be a brilliant mode of transport. Short of parading down Piccadilly, I can't imagine what could be more thrilling.

After dropping my children off at school in Victoria I can now Rollerblade to work in Wapping in 45 minutes flat. It takes only a little longer than the Tube. True, I can't read *The Times* on my travels. But what the Tube does not offer is glorious views of the Thames, fresh(fish) air, a feeling of exhilaration as you pick up speed and a great sense of achievement when you finally arrive, glowing and triumphant, at your desk.

This year's Christmas present is a Discman, so that I can listen to CDs while I skate. Dub reggae and funk are the best, as I send my blades whooshing to the beat. Forget jogging or the gym. This is that elusive discovery: a form of exercise that is actually fun.

It is as hard as it looks, to begin with. But, if you ever ice-skated or roller-skated as a child, your limbs already know the basic score. Stopping is a lot more difficult than starting: on my first foray on blades, I had to grab a passing lamppost and execute a couple of spins around it in order to prevent myself skidding into the traffic. Unfortunately the traffic happened to be a minibus full of policemen who fell about laughing at this ridiculous spectacle. The police driver turned on his loudspeaker and broadcast my humiliation to the world: "Have you got a licence for those things, Miss?"

A lesson later, though, and I was beginning to get the hang of the blade. We bumped into Hugh Sawkill, an Oxford physics graduate turned Rollerblading expert, teaching someone else in Hyde Park, and engaged him for a family instruction the next day. He showed us the various methods of turning, stopping and dealing with kerbs. And there was the constant reminder: "Bend your knees."

As with skiing, this is the most important, but also the hardest, instruction to remember. You instinctively straighten your legs when danger looms: you have to re-educate your reflexes. But this is not the only resemblance with skiing. At its best, on a smooth, flat surface with no cars or pedestrians and a beautiful view, you can work up a speed and a rhythm which give you just the same sense of euphoria as a really good run down a piste — for a fraction of the price.

I admit that Bournemouth is hardly St Moritz, and the après-blade leaves something to be desired. But, when I took my skates down there for the

Tory party conference, and set off on a crisp Indian summer's morning for an hour's exercise along a deserted promenade, I wondered why we had spent so much money on a trip to the Alps that spring. The beach was a many-mile-long sandy crescent, the sea was sequin-sparkling in the sun and the grassy hills surged up from the shore. No one else was about, save the occasional jogger putting far more work into his mode of transport than I, swooshing silkily past.

Few other forms of exercise can equal such elation. Skiing is up there. Galloping is great. And tacking close to the wind when a gust tips the boat almost perpendicular to the water, hits the spot too. But Rollerblading is the only one of these that you can do in a city, with minimal kit, at low expense. How many people can commute to work on skis, on horseback or in a dinghy?

What is more, it gives you exactly the right amount of exercise. Riding and sailing may be fun, but they don't get you very fit. Jogging, on the other hand, is too much work; you feel you may collapse at any moment with a coronary.

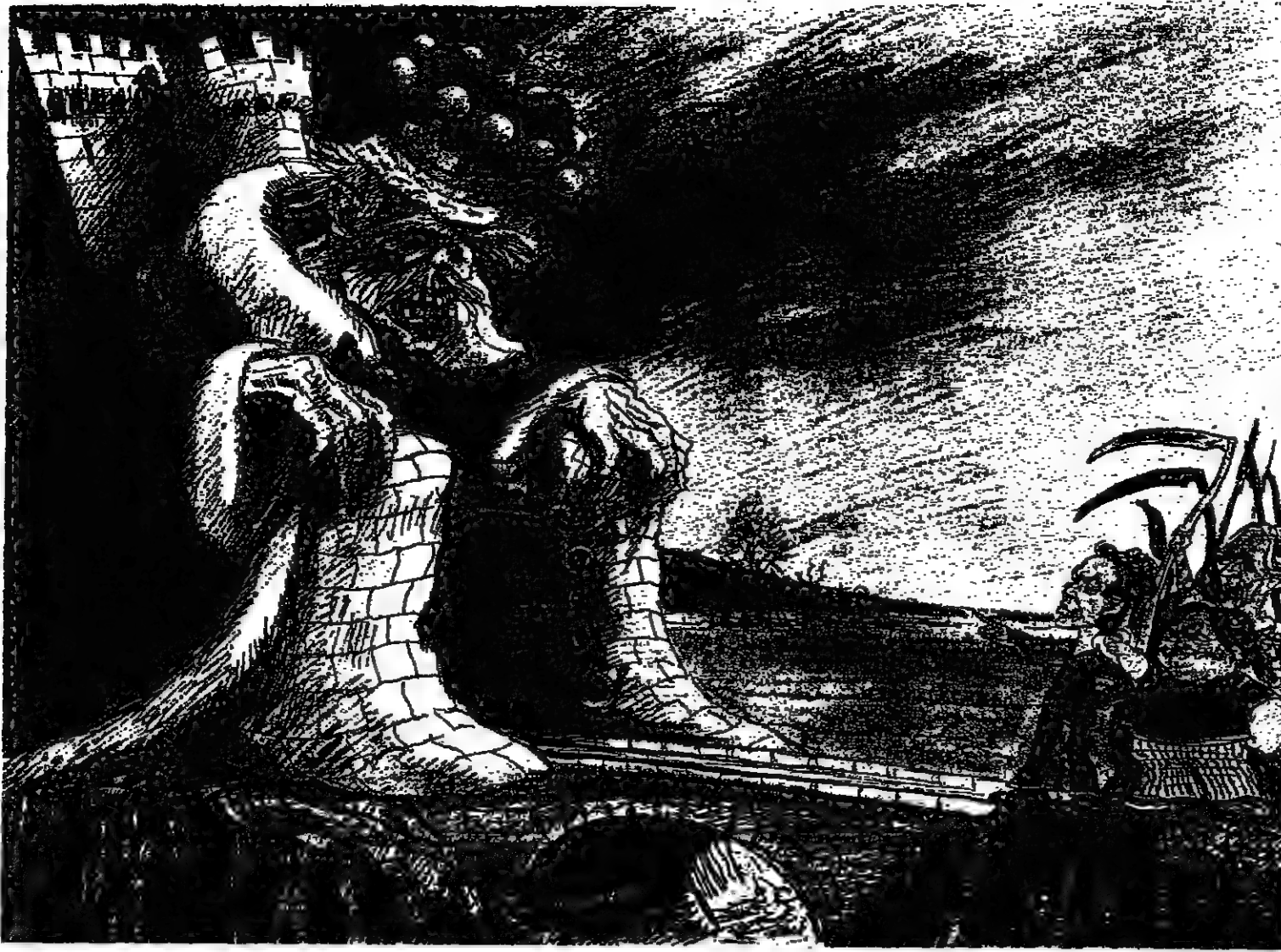
Cycling is great, but dangerous in London, where buses and taxis try to make a kerb sandwich of you. Rollerblading is about as energetic as cycling but — relatively — safer.

At any rate, you do it on the pavement, rather than in the road, and you wear protective gear. I have so far suffered nothing worse than a rather undignified graze to my chin. I have not yet bumped into a pedestrian; as long as you slow down, it is no more hazardous to others than jogging past them. But there is the endless hassle of kerbs, wobbly paving, stones and roads to cross. Except on a few stretches — the edge of St James's Park, the very occasional smooth section of the Thames Path — it is hard to build up the all-important rhythm and speed.

Our whole family goes Rollerblading at weekends. We have tried Battersea Park, we have tried Hyde Park, we have tried the riverside in Hammersmith. We have yet to discover that perfect Bournemouth-like nirvana where there is a long, even surface on which you can glide rather than judder (rough surfaces make your whole body vibrate, a feeling my daughter describes as "fizzy lemonade").

So I appeal to John Reid, the Transport Minister. This must be the most eco-friendly form of transport. It is silent, non-polluting and uses no energy other than our own. It does not clutter up the roads, as cycles do. And it is beautiful to watch. Please, Mr Reid, allow us a few long, smooth paths in London, perhaps alongside the river. Grant me my modest New Year's wish, and you can even call it an "integrated Rollerblading strategy for the millennium" if you like.

maryann.sieghart@the-times.co.uk



Lords on camera

Anthony Howard finds the BBC quaintly feudal in its approach to the filming of an outmoded institution

The House of Lords has in recent years done pretty well out of television. In a way, it has deserved to. The authorities there allowed the cameras in a full four years before they were admitted to the Commons; and in that strange, hiatus period — from January 1985 to November 1989 — the TV viewing public took quite a fancy to the courtly manners and stately rhythms of Lords debates.

Later on, of course, after the novelty had worn off and the regular coverage of actual proceedings became more intermittent, there were a few hiccups along the way. Their Lordships did not much care for — indeed, a number of them jumped up and down in anger about it — a *Cutting Edge* documentary shown on Channel 4 in 1992 which dared to suggest that some at least of them saw the exalted body to which they belonged as a convenient means of indoor relief.

Particularly regrettable in such eyes was the prominence the programme gave to an hereditary peer — a former bus driver from Brighton — who could hardly believe his luck in being able to scoop up something like £100 a day from his *per diem* allowance whenever the Lords was sitting. This unfortunate peer was also thought to have let the side down by wading too lyrically on the delights of the tuck-shop — reserving his particular praise for the subsidised afternoon tea ("crumpets, muffins, tea, cake, something rather naughty with cream") served by motherly souls in the Lords dining room.

Almost equally unpopular was a *Dispatches* programme, again made for Channel 4, some three years later. This one went so far as to allege that one or two Noble Lords were "on the take" so far as outside lobbying interests were concerned. The charge was made before the full blossoming of the "steazie" allegations in the Commons, so it lacked the impact it might otherwise have had. Nevertheless, especially as the Upper House has rather laxer regulations in this area than now pertain in the Other Place, it did succeed in leaving a rather nasty taste — one that *Private Eye* has done its best to exploit with its recent running feature on "Lords for Hire".

It may, therefore, have been with mixed feelings that peers of all parties recently learnt that the BBC was preparing a series of three programmes under the collective

(and to some, no doubt, menacing) title of *Inside the Lords*. Having had an advance look at two of them, I can safely say that any apprehensions can be laid to rest. Beautifully shot and marvellously evocative, this particular series would seem to have as its aim the preservation in aspic of a notably quaint and eccentric British institution.

No one watching the first two programmes would get much idea of the arguments currently going on over the future of the Second Chamber. Admittedly, Lord Richard, the former government Leader in the Lords, is allowed to mumble away a bit about the anomaly of having

heredity as the basis of any legislative body, but his voice is soon muffled by that of Viscount Tenby. This grandson of Lloyd George emerges as a traditionalist of traditionalists. "It's not something you can go and trumpet around outside," he avers at one stage, "but my own very strong view is that, when all the huffing and puffing has died down, I doubt very much you'll have a better chamber than you've got now... but who cares about that?"

When you have the great goddess of democracy dangled in front of everyone? (His intensely democratic grandfather, who once famously spoke of the House of Lords as consisting of "a body of men chosen at random from the ranks of the unemployed", must, one assumes, be turning in his grave.)

What this series lacks, in fact, is any feeling for history. Of course, in its antique shop version — the absurd "Garter" and all the other ridiculous bits of flummery — tradition permeates the screen. But there is a distinct diffidence (especially notable in Clive Anderson's surprisingly anodyne commentary) about tackling any of the issues that the history of the House of Lords has thrown up over the past century and more. How, for example, did it come about that the three Reform Bills of the 19th century,

while progressively widening the popular franchise for the Commons, should have left the far greater democratic scandal of the House of Lords invulnerable and intact? It was certainly not what anyone expected at the time — even in 1832 it was generally assumed that, as an hereditary assembly, the House of Lords would be lucky to last a decade. Yet for the rest of the century the Upper House not only survived but flourished. Why?

The answer would seem to be that the hereditary peers genuinely did at that stage represent an Estate of the Realm — broadly, the landed interest. Towards the end of the century they were fortunate, too, in finding an improbable ally in W. E. Gladstone. From the moment he first embraced the Home Rule cause in 1885-86, driving out the great Whig families from the Liberal Party in the process and, as a consequence, turning the Lords into virtually a one-party chamber, he provided it with almost a licence to challenge the Commons. Even so, it took a good deal of brass-neck arrogance for the House of Lords in 1893 to defeat the second Home Rule Bill — already carried through all its stages in the Commons — by an almost totalitarian majority of 419-41.

The significant fact, though, is that it did so with impunity — and the House of Lords has since gone on to establish a pretty shrewd pattern of conduct over its choice of populist issues on which to confront the Commons. Yet it is hard to see even that as a sufficient explanation for its astonishing record of survival — at least since the Parliament Act passed under the Asquith Government in 1911.

In its preamble that first piece of legislation to put a bridle on the Lords gave a specific pledge that all hereditary peers would be removed from the Upper House "within the term of the present Government" — which, but for the First World War,

would have meant by 1915 at the latest. Yet, miraculously, the hereditary male element remained wholly undiluted — and totally undified by women — until 1958 when Harold Macmillan's essentially cosmetic Life Peerages Act introduced not only the "dayboys", as they characteristically came to be called, but — much more important — women, for the first time, into the Second Chamber. (Did nobody, one can't help wondering, think it odd that, while female MPs could sit in the Commons from 1918 onwards, not even hereditary peeresses in their own right were admitted to the Lords until more than 40 years later — and even then the first one of them was obliged initially to take her seat as a life peeress?)

The sad truth is that nothing so vividly illustrates the inertia principle at the heart of British politics than the way in which the Lords have successfully withstood reform throughout this century. After the Kaiser had enabled the hereditary peers to make good their escape from Asquith and Lloyd George, they faced only one other serious challenge. That came in the shape of the Parliament (No 2) Bill of 1969. The product of the inventive mind of Dick Crossman, this immensely complex and detailed measure never really stood a chance of getting on to the statute book — least of all when an unholy alliance of Michael Foot and Enoch Powell resolved to fight it, line-by-line on the floor of the House of Commons. After consuming to its avail 12 days of parliamentary time, the Bill was eventually and humiliatingly abandoned by a Labour Government headed by Harold Wilson.

The next few weeks should show whether Tony Blair is made of sterner stuff. But the approach march to the battle has also revealed something else — that, despite all the changes made by Sir John Birt to its structure, the BBC remains an Establishment organisation at heart. Present its most talented film-makers with even the most antiquated and outdated part of our national fabric — and their automatic instinct will be to celebrate it with touchingly nostalgic pictures and deferential feudal echoes.

Inside the Lords starts on BBC2 at 8pm on Sunday.

comment@the-times.co.uk

Beware the euro yes-men

Paul Sykes calls for a frank debate on further unification

As the euro is launched into uncertain waters, those who wish Britain to participate in economic and monetary union are already making predictable noises about how we cannot afford to be left out for long. The language of urgency is being deployed to prevent rational scrutiny of a project that will have profound consequences for Europe.

It is no surprise that those who advocate the abolition of the pound are unwilling to deal with the matter candidly. The apostles of unification have often given the impression that the democratic process is, in the short term, an inconvenience to be circumvented and, in the long term, an inappropriate mechanism for decision-making in the new Europe. Hence Claude Cheysson, the former Foreign Minister of France: "The construction of Europe has taken place because of intergovernmental co-operation. We worked the normal democratic structures and that is why we succeeded."

Nor should one assume that such attitudes are confined to the other side of the Channel. Hugo Young's book, *This Blessed Plot*, is littered with examples of cynical evasions on the part of British politicians and civil servants in their efforts to propel us into an ever-closer union.

The only reason the British people are to be given the opportunity to vote on the euro is because John Major sought to buy off Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party as the 1997 general election loomed. Determined not to be outflanked on the European issue, Labour followed suit. What is proclaimed as a virtuous safeguard was, for Tony Blair, a necessary evil. How Peter Mandelson and other pro-Euro strategists must wish that Mr Blair had avoided giving that pledge. Without it, there is little doubt Britain would be far further down the road to full participation in EMU.

As the referendum approaches it is becoming clear it will be a truly momentous decision. The tortuous relationship between Britain and the supranational entity that, through mental laziness and intellectual sleight of hand, we have learnt to call "Europe" will come to a resolution. To vote "no" would create an almost insurmountable obstacle to further British participation in the grand project of European unification. The other EU countries would see it as justification for divorce.

Yet saying "yes" would undermine, perhaps fatally, the legitimacy of our domestic democratic institutions. If workers in my native Yorkshire found their jobs were disappearing because of the desire of unaccountable bankers in Frankfurt to prevent "overheating" elsewhere in the Union, they would demand action from their elected politicians. How would they react if their MPs told them that there was nothing they could do? From this week interest rates are to be determined at an EU-wide level, for the supposed benefit of the European economy, and those charged with making such judgments cannot be sacked by anyone.

Soon tax will also be set at a European level, despite Mr Blair's protestations. Tax harmonisation is not only a logical development of EMU, it is the avowed objective of the Finance Ministers of France and Germany. Even income tax is on the table. Those commentators who insist that no one has even suggested a European income tax have obviously not been listening to the President of the European Parliament. Will the hard-pressed workers of Britain, white-collar and blue-collar alike, accept taxation without representation?

Issues of legitimacy and accountability stir deep passions. In Britain one can point to the introduction of the poll tax, the closing of the coalmines and the impact of Thatcherism on Scotland and Wales as examples of challenges to Westminster's right to lay down the law. It is impossible to govern without making hard choices and if these have a negative impact on people, it is vital that they accept the legitimacy of the politicians who have made the decisions and feel they can get rid of them. There is already resentment towards Brussels on the part of many Britons, even though only a small minority, notably our fishermen, have been harmed seriously by the EU.

The United Kingdom has the fifth largest economy in the world. We also have a functioning democracy that has survived many tribulations. No one pretends we don't have problems, but they are not remotely of an order to compel us to abandon self-government.

For too long those who have sought, by fair means and foul, to secure British participation in the integration of Europe have been allowed to dodge the hard questions. Most of them know what they want — a de facto united states of Europe. If they have the honesty to declare that aim, we should respect their integrity while deploring their objectives and leave the British people to decide. However, should they choose to carry on with ever more implausible denials in the face of all the evidence, no quarter will be given.

The author is chairman of the Democracy Movement.

comment@the-times.co.uk

Support role

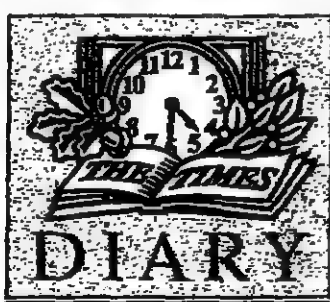
PETER MANDELSON has found solace with Kevin Spacey, the private Hollywood actor. I am delighted to learn. Wendy was first seen revelling in the company of Spacey, who has migrated from Los Angeles to the more delicate climes of London, at the launch party of the Old Vic in October, and the two have been close since. My brother Owen noted in his diary that the duo hit it off splendidly, but at the time I wondered if he had been at my gin again. But now Notting Hill chums of Mandelson,



British newspapers devoted generous column inches to the shoot-out in Yemen, which lead to the death of three British hostages. The FT's headline on Thursday bristled with patriotic concern: "Four Germans freed in Yemen".

Manic mum

THE mother of the Duke of Edinburgh is to be the unlikely subject of a biography by Hugo Vickers, the royal author. Clearly



feeling brave, the Royal Family gave him unprecedented access to private archive material at Windsor, Broadlands and Darmstadt.

I just hope that the Duke likes the book. It will not be so discreet as obituaries, detailing how Princess Andrew of Greece, the sister of Lord Mountbatten, went into a Swiss sanatorium after a religious crisis. Nicknamed the "barney nun", she spent the last years of her life wandering around Buckingham Palace in grey monastic full-flowing robe and coil. Quite why this needs to be raked over all these years on, I have little idea.

Blue year

GAZING into my Waterford crystal ball, I see a year of comebacks, dastardly deeds and the odd strange vanishing.

Comebacks. Although his campaign to be London mayor has had its blips, Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare will see off sleazy Socialists and triumph. Alan Clark, a polymath in a party of pilgrims, will become leader of the 1922 Committee. My old friend Lord St John of Fawsley will be dragged from his longed-for retirement to replace Stella McCartney on Tony Blair's Committee of God. Dear old Lord Longford, so understanding about human lapses, will be appointed the Government's sleaze-buster. And "Lady" Arabella Russell-Sackett will be made a countess to stop the sniggers. Scandal will be provided by the PM — caught ducking into a



"What about me?"

Geneva clinic to have his simian line removed. Regular readers will remember that my disclosure about what crossed Tony Blair's palm caused unkind chroniclers to suggest that the PM was shifty, egotistical and quite possibly autistic. As the PM has off-loaded all other dodgy old baggage, I entirely expect him to avail himself of a plastic surgeon.

Vanishing. The most amazing example will be the retirement from society of the delightful Father Michael Seed, Roman Catholic convert to the gentry, who will go off to meditate and boil stew in a Scottish croft. He will be replaced as aide to Cardinal Basil Hume by his friend Peter Stringfellow, who has a similar eye for publicity that will help to get the cardinal noticed. In the media, I predict more welcome vanishings for that old happy Polly Toynbee, whose Sixties writings have surely had their day; for Taki, who has taken to invention in his rant in *The Spectator*; and of course Rosie Boycott. To everyone else, I send best wishes for a seriously swinging and scandalous new year.

RELATIONS between Americans and the Irish, normally so rosy, are strained at last. Sinéad Cusack (above), the Cork actress who shares Jeremy Irons's bed-chamber, believes she is being



discriminated against by Broadway. Starlets such as Nicole Kidman gain plaudits for working in the West End but strict American union laws prevent Cusack's countryfolk from wowing the Big Apple. "This is not sour grapes, but our own actors should be given an equal opportunity," protests Sinéad, suffering from tortuous foody metaphor syndrome: "It's all very well for those Americans being the cream in our coffee, but we don't want it all to turn to sour milk."

JASPER GERARD

comment@the-times.co.uk

هكذا من لا يملك



PRIDE OF NATIONS

Britain will stand stronger for staying out of EMU

Today is a proud and historic day for Europe and, even more so, for Britain. In continental countries, governments and political philosophers have been dreaming for centuries about the creation of a unified European State that would stretch from Brussels to Brindisi, from Berlin to Bilbao. Today's launch of European economic and monetary union (EMU) which will transfer the most important economic functions of the 11 participating governments from the national to the European level, is not only the culmination of more than a decade of political commitment and economic sacrifice for the major European nations. It is probably the biggest step ever taken towards the ideal of a full-scale European union—at least by democratic, as opposed to military, means.

If EMU appears a success, which in practice will be judged by whether the introduction of the euro coincides with a substantial reduction in unemployment, the momentum for further integration among participating countries will receive a major boost. Economic developments in Europe will, in truth, be largely a function of global events and of decisions on deregulation and economic restructuring which still have to be taken at the national level. But if the introduction of the single currency does happen to coincide with the end of a decade of economic stagnation in Europe, the advocates of further integration are bound to claim vindication.

But even if EMU proves less successful, the initial effect may be to increase pressures for further centralisation. If EMU offers no salvation for Europe's unemployed—if, instead, it unleashes new waves of international competition and job losses—then Europe's politicians will naturally seek to deflect blame from the inherent flaws in the EMU blueprint, as well as from their own failure to undertake the necessary domestic restructuring. The

natural reflex of EMU's sponsors may well be to look for new ways of centralising economic decision-making at the pan-European level, beginning with Franco-German demands for tax harmonisation. Almost whatever happens economically in the next few years, therefore, European integration is likely to claim that EMU necessitates further steps towards full unification. In the long run, of course, it remains to be seen whether the disparate nations of Europe would submit quietly to the degree of centralisation and bureaucratic control implied by the EMU blueprint. But for the majority of continental politicians who are strongly committed to the long-term ideal of further integration, today's launch of the euro is a source of great pride.

The same should be true of Britain. Outside EMU Britain may rediscover its historic role as a great trading nation, deeply involved in Europe, but always independent and looking outwards to the rest of the world. Outside EMU, Britain will remain the world's fifth largest economy and a full member of the EU. Its pivotal position in the single market will be guaranteed not only by treaty but also by the fact that Britain will be easily Europe's largest trading partner. Like Sweden, and Denmark, Britain should continue to prosper as an independent country. And although, as EMU pushes Europe towards further integration, new arguments may arise for and against Britain joining, there should be no more economic or financial pressure on Britain to give up its independence than there has been on Canada to join the US, or New Zealand to merge with Australia. Britain's relationship with Europe cannot and will not be decided by businessmen and financial markets. It will be settled by British voters, according to their own judgments, and in their own good time.

GREEN SPROUTS

Rachel Carson planted the seeds of environmentalism

The flourishing of the Sixties may have brought free love and flower power and psychedelic ideals; but even as the age of the earth mother bloomed, a ripple of alarm was ruffling the grass roots of society. Lackadaisical daydreams of living for the moment were pierced by the sharper realities of rapid industrial development. And, in the wake of the 1966 slag heap slip at Aberfan which buried a school, or the oil pollution caused by the stricken tanker *Torrey Canyon* in 1967, a youth movement was beginning to grow up and wonder what sort of legacy might be left to their offspring.

In 1962 Rachel Carson had published her fierce polemic *Silent Spring*. Marshalling empirical evidence of environmental damage done by chemical pesticides, she had exposed with steely authority the arrogance and folly of those who sought to conquer nature, disregarding the integrity of the natural world and the interdependence of all living things. The response of the Establishment was vicious. Carson's scientific credentials were impugned and her status as a childless, unmarried woman belittled. But as evidence of graver ecological damage kept coming in, public opinion remained stalwart. *Silent Spring* planted the seeds of an environmental movement which in the 1970s was to germinate and sprout into a mainstream political issue.

At first this Green movement spread by word of mouth among like-minded individuals, its ideals increasingly seeping out into broader society as the validity of its concerns became ever more apparent. In 1972 the classic research project *Limits to Growth* was published, setting the agenda

for a survivalist stream of thought. Its conclusions were taken as evidence of a catastrophic fate awaiting man unless rising levels of production and consumption were curbed. Barbara Ward's *Only One Earth* called for a fundamental shift in human allegiances away from the family and the nation state to the planet itself.

In 1972 Barbara Ward also presented a report to the first UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. Shortly afterwards the European Union decided to initiate the first environmental action programme. The Values Party, founded in New Zealand in 1972, was the first Green party in the world, and the forerunner of the British Green Party was established, as the People's Party, a year later. Environmental concern became as fashionable as kipper ties and platform boots. The politics of catalytic converters, power station scrubbers and bottle banks held sway. And a pattern was set for an ensuing decade in which the environment, described by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s as a "bum-rum issue", came to be regarded, even by her, as "one of the great challenges" of the 20th century.

The focus of 1970s environmentalism was resource depletion. More recently this has been replaced by the idea that it is not so much scarcity of resources that causes the problem but the impact man makes on the planet by his use of them. But still, that decade when Green politics first put down their roots established a precedent. The West took a serious look beyond the moment, beyond the next set of economic figures, to a more distant future. And in this it anticipated a millennial mood.



PEOPLE OF THE CENTURY

ROMAN TYPES

The number's not yet up for ancient numerals

For architects, film producers, kings, Popes, Olympic officials and families in which males pass their names to their sons the millennium bug has struck a year early. They awake today unsure of the date. For, unlike most of us, this eclectic group still counts in the system in use two millennia ago, dating its documents with an array of capital letters. And now (as we report on page 1 column ii) there is a dilemma unforeseen by Caesar or those recording his epics in wide screen celluloid: does today begin the year MM? Or MCMXCIX? Or even, long-windedly, MDCCCCLXXXVIII?

Roman numerals are majestic, elegant and confusing. Some three centuries before the Year of Our Lord (impossible to represent in a system that has no zero), digital notation first took hold: holding apart his fingers and thumb a legionnaire chiselled a V on the milestone. And if Publius owed Claudius 10 sesterces, a double V or X could be gouged on a wax tablet. Larger numbers were difficult. IOU. Larger numbers were difficult. Borrowing the Greek phi to represent 1,000, the Ancients simply added brackets either side of the I, so that 100,000 was either side of the I, so that 100,000 was written as (I)(I). The Columna Rostrata, erected to commemorate victory over the Carthaginians, repeated this symbol 23 times to give the figure of 2,300,000.

The rules are not cast in stone. Bored masons took short-cuts, and the subtractive principle caught hold. By the Middle Ages four strokes had been replaced by IV—for everyone except horologists. To this day, the clock stands still at X to III.

The system does not add up. Mathematics had to wait for the Arabs. How the Romans crossed 'hill' and dale in such straight lines remains a mystery, as the finest surveyors in the land could not build Britain's first motorway (the I001) without curves. But complexity has its advantages. No one can complain that the BBC is repeating old material, for by the time you have begun to work out MCMCLXXXVIII the credits have rolled past. Linger in front of a handsome town hall, you have time to admire its lines while you decipher its cornerstone. And if you are called James Baker III, you can always insist that the tax demand should have been addressed to your father or even your grandfather, instead.

Writing a month in Roman numerals could resolve the transatlantic confusion between 6 September and June 9. It would add joyful tension to the lottery if all balls were Roman. And it connects us to our forebears: for though present confusion may last a year, we shall all know what we will celebrate in the year MM.

Wish the euro well but keep UK out

From Sir John Craven and others

Sir, The advent of the euro is a time to wish the new currency well. No British interest will be served if our European partners have an unstable currency. Nevertheless, it remains right for Britain to stand aside from this politically driven venture. Our business cycle is different from that of Germany and France. And our investment and trading patterns are different. British industry and commerce do more business in dollars than in all the European currencies combined.

Within the single market, but outside euroland, the prospects for Britain are bright. We have the fifth largest economy in the world and one of the most competitive; our political and trading interests reach around the globe, and our information-based industries are ideally suited to the 21st century. We will be able to set our monetary policy to suit our own conditions—an advantage which outweighs the modest gains to be derived from a regional currency zone.

After the euphoria of the euro's launch, grand vision will give way to practical realities. Upward harmonisation of tax is still urged on us as a logical consequence of EMU. The City, for example, faces the threat of a withholding tax on savings, which would be immensely damaging for London's vast international capital-market operations. An inward-looking Europe, with an overgrown public sector, has not yet recovered its ability to create jobs. The euro is no panacea for these problems. It could well exacerbate them.

Having restored sterling's reputation for financial discipline, let us have the confidence to keep it. What is right for Britain will be good for Europe too.

Yours etc,
JOHN CRAVEN,
Chairman, Lönhr,
TIM CONGDON,
Managing Director,
Lombard Street Research,
WALTER ELTIS,
Emeritus Fellow, Exeter College, Oxford,
GERARD LYONS,
Chief Economist, Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank (DKB) International,
TIM MELVILLE-ROSS,
Director-General, Institute of Directors,
BRIAN PRIME,
Executive Director,
Federation of Small Businesses,
SAINSBURY OF PRESTON
CANDOVER,
WOLFSON OF SUNNINGDALE,
Chairman, Great Universal Stores,
Business for Sterling,
18 Buckingham Gate, SW1E 6PE,
December 31.

Desert Fox strategy

From Air Commodore Alastair Mackie

Sir, Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon (letter, December 23) interprets the Desert Fox strategy as engaging the enemy's war-fighting capabilities at long range instead of "fighting eyeball to eyeball when you don't need to".

Surely it wasn't that we didn't need to but rather that we couldn't. In the absence of the huge forces needed for a land war, wasn't our strategy simply to see what air power on its own could do? And given an enemy with some very nasty weapons indeed and a known propensity to use them, were we not, and we are not still, facing the grave risks consequent on air power not having achieved very much?

Yours faithfully,
ALASTAIR MACKIE,
4 Warwick Drive, SW15 6LB,
December 24.

From Mr Ian Mavor

Sir, Your columns have carried extensive comment on the problem of identifying the real objectives behind the Iraq airstrikes by the US and Britain.

A clue may be provided by Michael Theodorou's report of December 21, in which he quotes Said Aburish, the Palestinian who is writing a biography of Saddam Hussein, as saying: "Don't bomb them [Iraqis on the ground]. Pull back and say, 'If he [Hussein] goes, you can export all the oil you want to rebuild the country'."

Are the UK and US Governments afraid of the impact on the price of oil which could come about from such a policy statement?

Yours faithfully,
IAN MAJOR,
53 Bushwood Road,
Kew, Surrey TW9 3BG,
December 22.

Ramblers' wrongs

From Mr Mark Shore

Sir, I do not wish to take sides in the "right to roam" issue, but the photograph of ramblers on your back page today might in a small way throw light on some of the landowners' objections.

Three of the ramblers are shown standing on a farm gate; one rule of the countryside is, if you have to stand on or climb over a gate, always do so at a time at the hinge end (basic physics, actually).

Yours faithfully,
MARK L. SHORE,
73 Woodburn Manor Park, Woodburn,
High Wycombe HP10 0ES,
December 28.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Multiple causes for decline in wild-bird numbers

From Mr Gavin Weightman

Sir, As an obituary of British wild birds Derwent May's article in today's Weekend section, "Where have all our birds gone?", is cautious and considered. However, in my view, it falls into the trap of overemphasising losses and underplaying gains.

For instance, there is ample shrub-habitat in Britain to support a much larger population of nightingales than arrives each summer and, since we are in the northern extremity of their range, their southward retreat may have nothing at all to do with the British environment. Our magpie population grew in the 1970s, spreading southwards from the Midlands. While the carrion crow is now very common in London, rooks disappeared from the capital in 1916 and the jackdaws left Hyde Park in the 1960s.

Sparrows, so rare now in many parts of the country, are abundant on the military firing ranges of Salisbury Plain and on the vast landfill rubbish dumps to the east of London. Song thrushes have been declining for a number of years, but mistle thrushes thrive. Great crested grebe, nearly extinct in Britain at the turn of the century, are now common, nesting on the lakes in London parks.

House martins, which returned to Central London after the Clean Air Act of 1956 had taken effect, have, inexplicably, recently disappeared from my area. In the countryside the planting of winter wheat seems to have favoured wood pigeons.

Perhaps such fluctuations are normal. It is certainly far too simple to blame them on the growth of industrialism. If the decline of sparrows in towns, for instance, is related to the disappearance of the once vast population of horses (as it may well be), is that an ecological disaster, or some-

thing we should calmly accept? Blackbirds were apparently much rarer in the 19th century than they are today: like robins and dunnocks (hedge sparrows), they are a woodland species that took to suburban gardens.

The natural world is wonderfully resilient and quick to exploit new opportunities. I wish the song thrushes would return to my back garden (they used to sing at night) but I really do not know what to blame for their disappearance. It is a sad and mysterious decline, but that is no reason to blame it on ourselves.

Yours faithfully,
GAVIN WEIGHTMAN,
15 Kelross Road, N5 2QS,
December 26.

From Mrs Elizabeth Sigmund

Sir, Congratulations on publishing Derwent May's article. I was amazed, however, to find in it no mention of the horrific effects of the use of pesticides and fungicides on wild birds.

Insecticides cause the death of thousands of our wild birds. Some of their effects are indirect: killing insects deprives birds of essential food. Others are direct: since the seeds of grain, vegetables, salad-crops and fruit are treated prior to planting, and then regularly sprayed with pesticides and fungicides, seed-eating birds are poisoned.

It is a terrible fact that our desire for "perfect" food can cause the destruction of these creatures, in the name of "scientific progress".

Yours sincerely,
ELIZABETH SIGMUND
(Co-ordinator, Organophosphate Information Network),
Heathfield Farmhouse,
Callington, Cornwall PL11 7HP,
December 28.

Penalties of an error of judgment

From Mr Alastair Albright

Sir, Since when was it a crime to aspire to better things or attempt to climb above one's station, or to lend money to a friend on preferential terms, or indeed without demanding interest at all?

Sadly, in today's Britain, no one can do such things honestly, decently and with genuine generosity without aspirations being cast, innuendoes and slurs being made as to one's motives, and even accusations being levelled of corruption, critical misjudgment or dishonesty (letters, December 23, 24, 26, 29 and 30).

Tony Blair should stand by ministers who fall foul of an envious, mean-minded and uncharitable press. In the spirit of the society he wishes to foster and proclaim, namely a Christian and a classless one.

Yours sincerely,
ALASTAIR ALBRIGHT,
64 Paddenswick Road, W6 0UB,
December 28.

From Mr John D. Hart

Sir, I understand that prisoners serving a life sentence may not be eligible for parole unless they admit that they are guilty of the crime for which they have been imprisoned. Should not government ministers who resign or are sacked for having shown a lack of judgment, while protesting that they have "done nothing wrong", be banned from holding any public office until they accept they have done wrong?

Should not any MP who has been forced to return to the back benches in such circumstances be obliged to seek a vote of confidence from his or her constituents through a by-election?

Yours faithfully,
J. D. HART,
Hill House, Marlesford,
Wickham Market, Suffolk IP13 0AZ,
December 26.

From Mr Neil Workman

Sir, The loan of £373,000 from Geoffrey Robinson to Peter Mandelson is for some of us "pretty gut-wrenching stuff" (report, October 19, of Mr Mandelson's comments on General Pinochet's claiming diplomatic immunity).

Yours sincerely,
NEIL WORKMAN,
11 Park Crescent, Pontyclun,
Rhondda-Cynon-Taff CF72 9BR,
December 29.

The ultimate irony

From Professor Kenneth Minogue

Sir, The concept of irony in your columns is getting out of hand.

One correspondent on December 19 thinks it ironic that we are sending goodwill Christmas cards to friends and dropping bombs on Iraq at the same time: another on the same day derives irony from our entry into the European Convention on Human Rights coinciding with the Pinochet decision being set aside because one judge is a public supporter of human rights.

The first example is no more ironic

than the fact that we enjoy mushrooms and avoid toadstools; the second is simply untrue. The judgment of the law lord in question has been set aside for the quite different reason that he was judge in a case where he belonged to the same organisation as one of the plaintiffs—an evident issue of natural justice.

The concept of irony has already run amok in academia; is it now becoming the pomposity of choice in public discussion?

Yours faithfully,
KENNETH MINOGUE,
43 Perryman Street, SW6 3SN,
December 19.

Addressing postcodes

From Mr Roger Macdonald Smith

Sir, Mr Ray Perkins (letter, December 28) is not alone in wondering why we are still expected to use full postal addresses despite the existence of postcodes.

Some seven years ago, curious to test the system, I posted a letter to myself from Kenilworth bearing only my initial and surname, and my postcode. It reached me here in Cornwall after about ten days. Various frankings on the envelope testified to a tortuous journey; among them was one which read: "Please use the postcode."

Four years ago I tried again. Posted this time in Nuthall, Nottinghamshire, with a second-class stamp, my letter reached me within 24 hours. There's hope yet.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER MACDONALD SMITH,
Mill House, Trehadde,
Cusburne, Truro TR4 8RN,
macs99@macsmith1.freeserve.co.uk
December 29.

From Mr Keith Harrison

Sir, I endorse all that Ray Perkins says about postcodes. I have sent letters quoting only the postcode and on

all occasions the addressee has told me that the Post Office has written the street address on the envelope before delivering the letter.

Yours etc,
KEITH HARRISON,
16 Dovedale Close, Cardiff CF2 5LS,
keith@keithharrison.freeserve.co.uk
December 29.

From Mr Reg Gale

Sir, Many of us have the habit of putting our own addresses on the backs of letters we send to families and friends abroad.

I always put simply: "GALE FORCE TEN CV35 0AQ UK", which is sufficient worldwide. I am sure.

I have the honour to be,
Sir, your obedient servant,
REG GALE,
Force Ten, Spinney Close,
Redlands Farm, Lighthorne,
Warwickshire CV35 0AQ,
December 28.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number—0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

From Mr Tony Collins

Sir, One of the items Santa left in my stocking this year is a book, *The Archers* (Virgin Publishing Ltd). I see from the back cover it is classified as "general non-fiction".

Is there something we should be told?

Yours sincerely,
TONY COLLINS,
37 Chaucer Road, Hillside,
Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 5RP,
tonycollins@dawdler.demon.co.uk
December 27.

Up to speed

From Dr Paula Moore

Sir, As a regular traveller by Eurostar, my husband received a Christmas card from them. It arrived on December 29. It seemed most appropriate.

Yours sincerely,
PAULA MOORE,
1 Northfield, Braughing,
Ware, Hertfordshire SG11 2QQ,
December 30.

From Mr Alastair Laing

Sir, Derwent May makes a strong case for a reappraisal of agricultural practices to allow our bird populations to thrive in the wild. However, until the consumer is prepared to pay the real market price of food produced less intensively—either through shop prices or taxation to support environmental subsidy—farmers will have little choice but to operate as efficiently as they can if they are to survive.

Yours faithfully,
ALASTAIR LAING,
Logie House,
Forres, Morayshire IV36 2QN,
December 28.

From Mr Rod Attrill

Sir, Here in western Wales there is little arable farming. The "endangered" skylark (letter, December 26) is a daily delight above our fields, while swallows still nest in our barn and linnet and meadow pipits abound. Red kites, ravens and peregrines are also common.

I do have one major concern, though. In the autumn, while the hedgerows are still laden with berries, they are drastically felled—cut back so that all new growth, leaves and berries included, is removed. This both reduces cover for birds and deprives them of a valuable source of pre-winter food.

I can understand the hedges being cut after the birds have finished breeding; but let's leave it until the new year, when they have also finished feeding.

Yours faithfully,
ROD ATTRILL,
Moygido Farmhouse,
Llanarth, Ceredigion SA47 0NU,
rod@attrill.freeserve.co.uk
December 26.

Aonach Mor avalanche

From Mr Peter Wood

Sir, Your report today on the Aonach Mor tragedy (later editions) indicates that, according to unnamed experts, a category three avalanche warning on a scale of one to five put out by the Scottish Avalanche Information Service was unlikely to deter "well-equipped" climbers from going out.

Mr Wilde's party was apparently fully and properly equipped and that had no bearing whatever on the fact that the slope they were on avalanched. If a category three warning will not deter or cause modification of plans, what will? Perhaps the inquiry will determine the issue in a meaningful form. (I write as someone who has survived an avalanche.)

Yours faithfully,
PETER WOOD,
Newbold Farm,
Dunstrutbourne Abbas, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire GL7 7UN,
December 31.

Yachting pioneers

From Major M. C. Lewin-Harris

Sir, I really must applaud you and Sir Robin Knox-Johnston for his article on the Sydney-Hobart race, "Tested to the limits" (December 29). Having taken part in the 1979 Fastnet race (and come to grief, albeit not terminally) I can fully support the need for challenge, which was never more important than it is today.

Now, as a cruising yachtsman, I can not only enjoy my pastime, but do so in comparative comfort and safety. This is thanks to the many developments which only happened because people like Glyn Charles, or Pete Goss, who rescued a fellow competitor in the Vendée Globe race in similar conditions (reports, December 27 and 28, 1996), or indeed Sir Robin himself, are willing to accept such challenges and, in doing so, develop the necessary equipment to meet them head-on.

Long may this spirit continue.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL LEWIN-HARRIS
(Vice-Commodore,
The Royal Cruising Club),
Conquest Farm, Norton Fitzwarren,
Taunton TA2 6PN,
musketeer@diapix.com
December 30.

Off target

From Mr Tony Collins

Sir, One of the items Santa left in my stocking this year is a book, *The Archers* (Virgin Publishing Ltd). I see from the back cover it is classified as "general non-fiction".

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Yours sincerely,
TONY COLLINS,
37 Chaucer Road, Hillside,
Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 5RP,
tonycollins@dawdler.demon.co.uk
December 27.

WILLIAM ALLEN

MacLean is the second original member of Love to die within a year, after Forssi's death from cancer last January. He never married and is survived by his mother and a half-sister.

**MR. E. H. HILLMAN:
AIRWAY PIONEER**

ON THIS DAY

January 1, 1935

Hillman built up the substantial foundations of the large business he controlled at the time of his death. They grew from very small beginnings. Mr. Hillman bought his first coach in 1923, and with himself as driver and his son as conductor ran a service between Romford and Chelmsford. It was at first far from successful, and on occasions it was necessary to borrow money to buy petrol. But at last success came to him. In time he was able to acquire more and more coaches until, by the beginning of 1930, he owned a fleet of over 200 and operated extensive services.

The formation of Hillman's Airways, Limited, was announced on December 18, with an authorized capital of £150,000. Hillman's Airways, Limited, stated yesterday: "The business is being carried on as usual."

2/2/01



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Sailor working his passage in both codes

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George Michael cleans up with his old hits

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How something for nothing sells papers

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FRIDAY JANUARY 1 1999

Warwickshire left-armer hurriedly brought into party in place of Croft

England call on Giles for spin option

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN SYDNEY

AT THE end of a tumultuous week, England have come up with a showstopper. Determined that they should not have the thunder of their Melbourne victory stolen by Australia conjuring up Shane Warne for the final Test in Sydney starting tomorrow, England produced their own spin surprise yesterday, direct from wintry Warwickshire.

Asley Giles's life story is not quite the soap opera that Warne claimed his to be. Indeed, he is so anonymous on the world stage that the press conference he conducted yesterday was halfway through before the Australian journalists present worked out who he was.

The only valid comparison between Warne and Giles is the unflattering one that both are prone to putting on weight. Yet England have decided that this journeyman slow left-armer may have an influential role in their bid to square the series by winning here for the first time in 20 years.

Giles, who arrived in Australia on Tuesday as part of the one-day squad, has officially been added to the Test party, and the prospect of a quite staggering selection later gained tacit acknowledgement from the team management.

While Giles practices in Sydney today, Robert Croft will play in a limited-overs game at

TEAMS

ENGLAND (from): A J Stewart (captain), M A Atherton, M A Butcher, N Hussain, M R Ramprakash, G A Hick, J P Crawley, W K Hogg, R D B Croft, R Giles, D W Headley, D Gough, A D Murray, T M Smith.

AUSTRALIA (from): M A Taylor (captain), M J Slater, J L Langer, M E Waugh, S R Waugh, D S Lehmann, I A Healy, S K Warne, S C G MacGill, D W Fleming, C R Miller, G D McGrath.

Sir Donald Bradman's native village of Bowral, Croft is crestfallen, as well he might be. He has already had to accept the loss of his senior spin bowling role to Peter Such, but finding himself further relegated by someone who was not even chosen for the tour is the height of indignity.

The faith in Giles, 25, is a further indictment of the quality of slow bowling in England. He has made his reputation bowling economically in one-day cricket and is not a big spinner of the ball. He was unfortunate to play his only previous Test on a moribund pitch at Old Trafford last July, taking one for 106 against South Africa. But there was little promise of better to come.

Giles is not yet sure to play, for a number of permutations remain open. Even the possibility, though, is a remarkably frank admission that the initial selection was flawed. The only point in including

two spinners rather than just one was that both might play on a turning pitch in Sydney. Now that theory has been abandoned. Of course, Giles offers something different but the selectors knew that when they omitted both him and Philip Tufnell last September. To even consider throwing in a bowler whose activity in the past three months consists of "a few indoor nets in Birmingham" smacks of desperation.

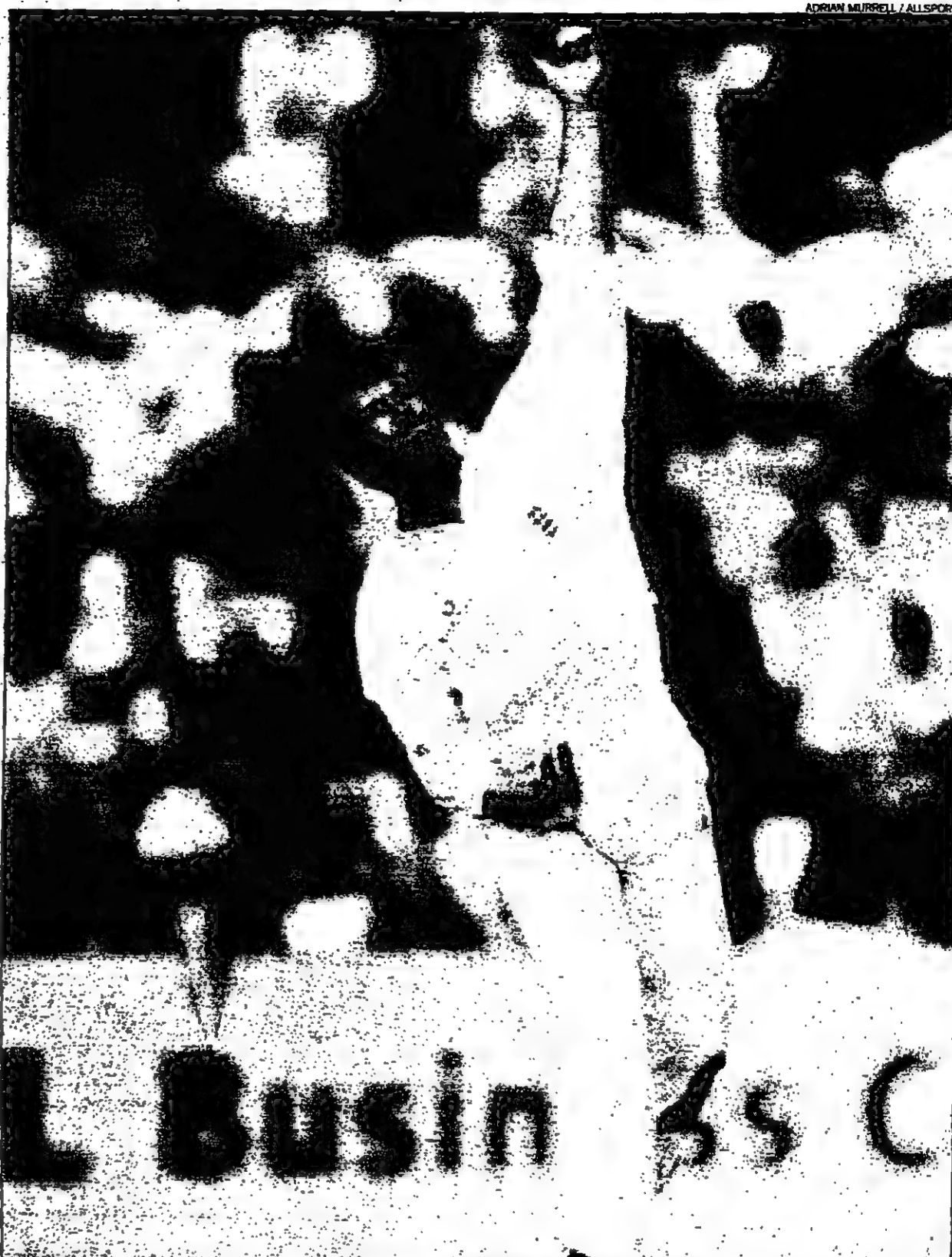
Alec Stewart, the captain, had not looked at the Test pitch by last night but suggested that England would play only four bowlers. "We haven't discounted two seamers and two spinners," he said, opening up all kinds of other bewildering possibilities.

Assuming that Darren Gough will lead the attack, England would then have to exclude either Alan Mullally, who has been much their best containing bowler, or Dean Headley, whose wickets won them the game in Melbourne.

Angus Fraser is definitely demoted again but the only way in which England could field three seam bowlers, and still play their two spinners, would be through Stewart's captaincy, keeping wicket and opening the batting. Last night, he was still resisting such an option. "It's highly unlikely we would do that," he said. But in this of all weeks, no one would bet against it.

After a free day at their beachside hotel, England will be practising early and trying to resolve selections they cannot afford to get wrong. High on their list of worries was the continuing poor form of Michael Atherton, who is averaging 16 in the series. Stewart admitted: "It's been disappointing, because we generally bat and play the captaincy and he made a hundred in his next Test," he recalled. "He'll keep playing and he'll feature strongly against New Zealand next summer."

Nasser Hussain should return to No 3, from where he ought not to have been moved, and Mark Ramprakash, England's leading batsman in the series with an average of 53, will come in next. Graeme Hick will feel he is owed a century here, Atherton having infamously declared with him



Giles, who took only one wicket in his previous Test at Old Trafford last summer, could be thrust into action tomorrow

Pakistan players face mounting evidence

A JUDICIAL commission yesterday warned Wasim Akram and Salim Malik, two former captains of Pakistan, that there was enough evidence to punish them over allegations of match-fixing.

Twelve players had been summoned over the allegations but only eight responded, according to Ali Sibtain Fazli, the Pakistan Cricket Board's legal adviser.

The commission issued bailable warrants against Rashid Latif, a wicketkeeper, for his failure to turn up for cross-examination, Fazli said. Rashid, who is attending to his sick

father, criticised the working of the commission in a press interview on Wednesday. Fazli said: "His remarks came under contempt of court and the judge was furious."

Wasim, Malik, Ijaz Ahmed, Mushtaq Ahmed and Waqar Younis — all allegedly involved in match-fixing and betting — yesterday cross-examined their accusers.

Aamir Sohail, the present Pakistan captain, Aqib Javed, the fast bowler, and Imtiaz Ahmed, the former team manager, who had accused the players of involvement in illegal practices, were in court.

STILL smarting from the latest controversial addition to his club's disciplinary roll of shame, Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, last night launched a scathing attack on the ethical degeneration of English football and warned that the FA Carling Premiership was in danger of taking over from Italy's Serie A as the chosen abode for cheats.

Wenger's criticism was prompted by the dismissal of Patrick Vieira, his France midfielder, against Charlton Athletic at The Valley on Monday. Vieira was shown the red card after he had elbowed Neil Redfern, who collapsed theatrically to the ground clutching his face. Replays showed, however, that Vieira had made contact only with his chest.

Wenger, angered by the apparent refusal of Uriah Rennie, the referee, to reconsider his decision even in the light of video evidence, said yesterday that Vieira, no stranger to trouble since his move to High-bury from AC Milan 2½ years ago, was bewildered by his treatment. Wenger is worried that what he saw as persecution of Vieira might drive him away from England.

The Arsenal manager also made it plain that he saw Redfern's actions as symptomatic of a trend in the English game that is fast undermining its reputation as the home of foot-

Wenger demands action over 'divers and cheats'

By OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

red card because it was Patrick who was involved.

"I accept that the referee may have been misguided and that he felt that Patrick had caught Redfern in the face, but what disappoints me more is that he will not reconsider."

RED MIST

Arsenal players sent off since Arsène Wenger became manager in August 1996:

1996-97: Nov 28: S Bould (v Liverpool), Nov 30: T Adams (v Newcastle United), Dec 21: I Wright (v Nottingham Forest), Jan 11: J Harrison (v Middlesbrough), Jan 11: D Bergkamp (v Sunderland), May 11: Adams (v Derby County). 1997-98: July 30: P Vieira and M Upson (v PSV Eindhoven), Oct 14: J Crook (v Birmingham City), Oct 28: E Post (v Aston Villa), Jan 17: Vieira (v Coventry City), Feb 18: Vieira (v Chelsea), Mar 15: Bergkamp (v West Ham United). 1998-99: Aug 23: Post (v Charlton Athletic), Sept 21: L Dixon (v Chelsea), Sept 22: S Keweenaw (v Sheffield Wednesday), Nov 25: R Parfitt (v Leeds), Dec 20: G Gilman (v Leeds United), Dec 22: Vieira (v Charlton Athletic).

If he won't look at it again, then it tells me he does not care. He just thinks he is right. "Maybe some foreign players have brought this kind of behaviour into the country but some English players are picking it up very quickly. No mat-



Wenger believes Vieira has become a target for referees

ter what nationality they are, I do not like players behaving like cheats. I want my players to concentrate on winning and playing the right way, not kicking or diving. France are world champions and they did not kick or dive and when England won the World Cup, they did not achieve it by diving."

Wenger, whose Arsenal side has collected 19 red cards in his short tenure at the club, including six so far this season, did not stop there. As he talked about how Vieira was determined to overcome the problems that were besetting him, he called for new measures to be introduced to punish cheats more heavily. As he was speaking, news was filtering through from the North East that Paul Danson, the referee who sent off two Sunderland players in a match against Arsenal two years ago, had been switched away from their FA Cup third-round game against Lincoln City tomorrow, so seeming to confirm the growing antipathy between clubs and officials.

patches. The Australians are so convinced it will turn that they are favouring three spin bowlers, the leg breaks of Warne and Stuart MacGill augmented by the off spin of Colin Miller, who will also double up bowling seamers.

Sydney is a city in a state of obsessive upheaval as it prepares for the Olympics next year. Tomorrow, though, attention will briefly return to cricket and the ground will be a throng of expectancy. There is suddenly a series in doubt. Warne is back, and there may even be some chap called Giles playing.

FEELING STUFFED?

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Tomorrow in the SATURDAY TIMES



Relegation with Middlesbrough was a shock because I thought I was a good manager. Now I've got my belief back.

MANAGING VERY NICELY NOW

Bryan Robson talks to OLIVER HOLT



WHAT A WEEK! FRANK LEOBOEUF on friends, foes and fouls

13 pages and the finest columnists: Alyson Rudd, Michael Lynagh, Lynne Truss, Robert Elms and Simon Barnes

Majestic Meissnitzer carrying all before her

John Hopkins
meets the
Austrian who has
been leaving
her rivals trailing

The World Cup circus has been winding its way through the Alps for almost a month now and at almost every stop Austrian men and women are establishing a rare dominance.

In the men's events Hermann Maier is performing as if his life depended on it. Maier, the double Olympic gold medal-winner, and his compatriots made history before Christmas by taking the first nine places in a World Cup super-giant slalom at Innsbruck. Last Tuesday, Maier and company confirmed that was no fluke by taking eight of the top ten places in a downhill in Bormio, Italy.

Alexandra Meissnitzer, who, carving her turns and gliding with ease from victory to victory, is leading the way for Austria's women and has already built up a 325-point lead over Martina Ertl, of Germany, in the World Cup.

Meissnitzer has had five victories in three different disciplines and three further podium places. The 25-year-old is favourite to continue her domination by winning a super-giant slalom in Maribor, Slovenia today.

In Austria, Christmas Eve is the day when they gather to celebrate and Meissnitzer made sure she was at home with her parents and her younger brother and sister, in Abtenau, to celebrate. Her father, a mechanic, and her mother were busy themselves with last-minute chores before the family sat down to the traditional dish of fish.

"Here, this is a big house," Meissnitzer said in her excellent English, as light snowflakes fell outside. "On the second floor I have my own living room and bedroom. I still have my parents for washing my clothes and cooking dinner. We have a good relationship. I do not hide anything from them and they treat me responsibly. It is best for me. I am three minutes by car from a chair lift."



Meissnitzer competes in the women's giant slalom at Semmering last Sunday. She suffered a rare defeat but extended her World Cup lead in the process

Abtenau is a village in Salzburg, one of Austria's nine provinces, the part of the country that has taken over from St Anton as the new breeding ground for Austrian ski champions.

Maier was born in Flachau, a village in a narrow valley not far from Abtenau, and Andreas Schiffler, winner of four World Cup downhills, comes from Radstadt, a few miles away. Also in the Pongau region is Weinarl where the great skier Ann-Marie Moser-Probst has a café.

So a friendship and rivalry among local friends has contributed to Austria's success. So, too, have the techniques of Chifjong, taught to Meissnitzer by Werner Tauernmann, who also works with Andreas Goldberger, an Austrian ski jumper.

"I used to get excited, nervous, hectic," Meissnitzer said. "I would be a good skier in training and then not reproduce it in a race. Werner has taught me how to remain calm. If I am first in the first run, that is no problem. I can handle any situation. Good results have built my self-confidence."

Gliding has not been a strength of Meissnitzer's skiing but this weakness has been improved recently by the use of skis supplied by Völkl after Atomic, the Austrian manufacturer, elected to sponsor the Germany women's team. Then there are the techniques of Karl Fehrer, the Austria women's coach, who used to train the Switzerland men's team.

Well-trained, fit and supported generously by a ski federation with an eye on the publicity for the country's tourism industry, the Austria skiers have an air of happiness and satisfaction about them.

"We had very good summer training on the glacier in Zermatt," Meissnitzer said. "We have a good federation with plenty of money and good trainers. Maybe some of the other teams do not have the same money as we do. I don't know exactly why Austria is so dominant at present, but I like it. I train with Anita Wachter in the Gs, with Sabine Egger in the slalom and Renate Götschl in the downhill and super-G. They are among the best in the world. If in training you are doing the same times as these skiers, you know you're good."



Meissnitzer: dominant

Meissnitzer was three years old when she first slid and, almost from that moment, her ambition was to become a racer. "Petra Kronberger was my hero," Meissnitzer said. "I saw her winning all the time and I thought it was very impressive that she did it all so quickly. I watched her until she quit when I was 18. She was most impressive. She was always doing the right thing, in training, even though she was the best, she always did more work than anyone else. I am one who must work really hard. I know I have a gift from God to ski well but so have others."

Meissnitzer skis the downhill, giant and super giant slalom disciplines and generally wins them too, though Wachter inflicted a rare defeat on her in a giant slalom in Semmering last Sunday. Two days later Wachter suffered small tears to her right ankle in training, and is doubtful for the technical events at Maribor.

"Alexandra has lots of self-confidence and knows what to do," Wachter said last month. "She is clearly the favourite for the season. She is so strong in the head." Deborah Compagnoni, the Italian skier, added: "In racing, the mental side of the sport is as important as the physical side. It is difficult to remain in form at the highest level for any length of time but for now Alexandra certainly has it."

SAILING

Soldini is on course to redeem himself

By EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

AFTER his dreadful performance in the first leg, Giovanni Soldini, the maverick Italian single-handed, was on course to restore lost pride with an impressive win in the second leg of the Around Alone Race yesterday. Barring the unexpected, Soldini should bring FFA into the finish at Auckland today.

The Italian was clearly unnerved by getting his routing so badly wrong in the first leg and will be delighted to have found his form over the demanding 7,000-mile traverse of the southern Indian Ocean. Having arrived in South Africa in fifth place and nearly three days behind Mike Golding, the Briton leading the race, Soldini was last night looking able to reduce that deficit by a day.

Soldini apart, however, this leg is proving another excellent one for Golding, who can afford to lose a bit of time to his Italian rival. His main aim was to increase his leverage over Isabelle Autissier, who was 24 hours behind him into Cape Town, and Marc Thiercelin, who was ten hours behind. Yesterday Golding was 200 miles behind Soldini but 250 ahead of Autissier and Thiercelin, who are battling for third and fourth places.

With 400 miles still to sail to Auckland, the confident Golding was already planning his campaign for the third leg. "I want to get in, not so much for the break, but so we can fix the boat and carry on," he said. "It's frustrating sailing with so many small breakages."

The other outstanding performance of this leg has been that of J. P. Moulligne, the Frenchman who has sailed a masterful race in his Class 2 Open 50, *Cray Valley*. It is a slower boat in most conditions than Mike Garside's *Magellan Alpha*, yet with 670 miles to go to the finish, Moulligne has a comfortable 460-mile cushion over his British rival.

What is more, the Frenchman is just a few miles behind Autissier and Thiercelin and a long way ahead of Josh Hall, of Great Britain, although each of them has more powerful machinery than he has. Garside was not afraid to congratulate Moulligne yesterday as he chased him across the Tasman Sea. "I am totally impressed," he said. "J. P. has sailed a flawless race."

Drugs case forces world No 13 to delay retirement in order to clear his name

Korda seeks clean break by playing on

PETR KORDA announced yesterday that he had planned to retire from tennis this Christmas, but has since changed his mind after the findings of a positive drug test have recently been made public. The Czech No 1 arrived here to begin preparations for the Qatar Open, a tournament that he won in 1996 and again last year.

The Qatar Open is the first event in which Korda has played since the International Tennis Federation (ITF) fined him \$94,529 (£57,000) and deducted 199 ranking points after testing positive at Wimbledon for the banned steroid nandrolone. The 1998 Australian Open champion has now vowed to continue playing for at least another year in a bid to clear his name.

Korda, 30, decided that 1998 would be his final year on the circuit after he had won back-to-back tournaments in Qatar and Australia earlier this year. "I wanted to play the season and then retire, but I couldn't retire in such circumstances," he said yesterday. "I now just want one or two more years to show people what Petr Korda is capable of on the tennis court."

Korda remains confident of his innocence and, despite a guilty verdict from the ITF, he believes that the failure to impose a ban demonstrates that they believed his defence that no substance was consciously taken. "I have never cheated and I have never taken any steroid to increase my performance on the court," Korda said.

"When I first heard the news I thought it was a bad joke, and it became a very difficult time for me and my family."

"But now I am very happy with the decision of the committee, which has shown that I am innocent because I didn't knowingly take anything to raise my performance. I am 100 per cent natural and not into anabolic steroids."

Korda was baffled as to how the traces of nandrolone showed up in the samples that he gave at Wimbledon after

Jon Green in Doha finds the Czech tennis player protesting his innocence despite positive steroid test

losing his quarter-final match against Tim Henman. "I did injure my foot that week but all the evidence that I've been able to piece together shows that everything I took was clean," he said.

"When I have an injection I always ask what is in it, but sometimes you just have to

trust the person who administers it. If I had any knowledge about how I came into contact with the steroid then I could set out to clear my name. But now I suppose I will always have a black mark on my back for the rest of my life and never be able to clean it off. I know that not many people be-

lieve me, but I have to defend myself and continue saying that I did not take anything."

The world No 13 maintains that he remains fully supportive of the anti-doping programme that is carried out by both the ITF and the Association of Tennis Professionals, to ensure that tennis remains a relatively untainted and drug-free sport.

However, it is likely that many within the game will question the message sent to the rest of the tennis community by the decision not to ban

Korda. Goran Ivanisevic, who arrived here on Tuesday to compete in the \$1 million event, said that if a player is guilty of taking nandrolone then he should be handed a ban, regardless of the circumstances.

"Last year I was tested nine times and I can tell you, it's a pain," he said. "The players will question tests continuing if no serious action is brought for a positive test."

He denied, though, that there would be ill-feeling between the other players and Korda. "Yes, it's not good for the game, but it's a matter for Petr and the ITF to sort out."

Korda's long-term aim is to get a full statement released by the ITF highlighting their complete findings rather than the edited version released on December 22. However, his first objective is to forget his problems and enjoy a successful beginning to the 1999 season.

"Winning the 1998 Australian Open was a dream come true, and of course anything is possible. I haven't lost the touch and I haven't lost the feel. My goal is to enjoy the tennis and if I enjoy it then I can always get some tremendous results. I wanted to get to No 1 last year and I got very close."

"The players that I most admired from back home were Ivan Lendl and Martina Navratilova, and they were playing their best tennis when they were between the age of 26 and 30. I'm still in that age group."



Korda believes he can put the controversy behind him and rediscover the form that brought him two titles last year

MOTOR RACING: BRITISH TEENAGER TIPPED TO COMPETE IN FORMULA ONE WITHIN THREE YEARS

Prolific Button destined to reach top of tree

By KEVIN EASON

IT IS a label that has tarred many a young driver on his struggle through the ranks to the golden prize of Formula One. But to many experts in motorsport, whose world is geared to finding the next great talent to rank alongside Ayrton Senna, there simply is no doubt about the quality of Jensen Button.

Anyone who has worked with him or watched his flashing talent on the track is convinced that Britain has produced the young man who will lead the next generation of Formula One drivers. Button, 18, is saddled with the onerous task of following a line of British Formula One world champions, that started with Mike Hailwood and ended with Damon Hill in 1996.

He is unlikely to have to wait long for his chance, for a test in a McLaren is now looming after But-

ton was named this year's McLaren Autosport British Racing Drivers' Club Young Driver.

Ron Dennis, McLaren's team principal, is convinced that Button is on his way to Formula One, perhaps within three years. Dennis said: "All the ingredients are there with Jensen. It is up to him. Three years is an ambitious schedule but it is achievable. We are aware of Jensen's ability and we have spoken to him already about his future."

Button has fired his way to the top with an astonishing record of success in karting, and the Formula Ford title this year at his first attempt. After becoming the youngest Super A Kart Champion of Europe, Paul Lemmons, his GKS Tecno team manager, said: "In my 25 years in karting, there have been only two drivers of such outstanding ability: one was Ayrton Senna, the other Jensen Button."

Button, from a village just outside Bath, starts next year with £50,000 worth of prize-money in his sponsorship pocket to fund a campaign in Formula Three, traditionally the conveyor belt to Formula One.

His new bosses at the Renault-backed Pronatec team were handed convincing evidence of his potential in his first test, his first drive in a Formula Three car. Within ten laps, he was half a second off the lap record at the French Magny-Cours grand prix circuit.

While Button was convincing in France, Justin Wilson was stunning in Italy on his first outing in a Formula 3000 car. Wilson has found the progression tougher than Button, relying on his father, Keith, a garage owner, to finance his career through karts and Formula Vauxhall, where he was with Paul Stewart Racing.

The struggle is relative, though. Wilson is still only 20 and this year achieved his breakthrough by winning the inaugural Formula Palmer Audi championship, his prize for victory being a season in Formula 3000. "It is very difficult because there is so much competition at every level and from so many countries now," Wil-

son, from Sheffield, said. "Finding the money is always difficult and, if it hadn't been for Palmer Audi, I would not have made it into F3000. It is my chance to impress."

Neither Peter Dumbreck nor Jonny Kane could find the money to keep them in Britain. In Dumbreck's case, a move to Japan has brought the success and exposure he yearned for. The Scot, 25, won the Japan Formula Three championship and topped off his season with victory in the prestigious Macau Grand Prix. Executives at Mercedes were quickly on the telephone for his services.

Kane, 25, from Northern Ireland, is off to America after running out of money and hope at home. The former British Formula Three champion has secured a seat in the US PPG Dayton Indy Lights series with Team Kool Green, which runs Dario Franchitti, of Scotland, in the rival CART championship.



Button: astonishing record

CRICKET

Tshwete renews attack on selectors

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

INSTEAD of dancing in the streets, South Africa's triumph over West Indies has provoked a political row. Steve Tshwete, the Sports Minister, criticised the national selectors after South Africa had completed their third successive Test victory over the once-mighty touring team on Tuesday, clinching the series.

Tshwete said the selectors had not picked enough black cricketers for the fourth Test which starts at the Newlands ground in Cape Town tomorrow. "The series was already in the bag - this was a good opportunity to let a talented youngster have a chance to play," he said. Tshwete claimed that the repeated exclusion of black players from the national side was denying them the chance to improve skills and gain experience.

Alli Bacher, the managing director of the United Cricket Board, said that he was disappointed by Tshwete's comments. He planned to challenge the minister yesterday when the pair attended a black cricket tournament in the Eastern Cape town of Port Beaufort. "The politicians must have confidence in us," Bacher said.

For Bacher and his fellow cricket administrators, recent criticism has come as a shock. Previously, cricket was hailed as a model sport because of its commitment to black development. Tshwete himself shared the talks between rival black and white cricket bodies that led to the formation of the United Cricket Board in 1991.

In the past year, however, four "black" cricketers have represented the country, including fast bowler Makhaya Ntini, the first black African to play Test cricket for South Africa.

India are certain to make changes for the third and final Test against New Zealand, starting tomorrow and their openers are under particular threat. Navjot Singh and Ajay Jadeja, both failed in the second Test, which India lost by four wickets to go 1-0 down in the series.

Sidhu is one of three players who have not been retained for the five one-day internationals that follow this Test. The other two to go home will be Robin Singh, the pace bowler, and Harbhajan Singh, the off spinner.

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FOOTBALL

Clock starts ticking in race to 2006 World Cup

By ROB HUGHES

WHEN Big Ben chimed midnight, the deadline for bids to stage the 2006 World Cup closed with the expected seven candidates officially declared. "From here on," Danny Jordaan, the former footballer and human rights leader who heads South Africa's application, said, "every candidate shares one fear, the fear of losing."

Jordaan has six months, but certainly not until March 2000 when the 24-man executive committee of Fifa, world football's governing body, vote on the issue, to make maximum use of the Mandela appeal. They are united, the football man and the President, who used sport to create the rainbow image of South Africa liberated from apartheid, in believing that Africa has a compelling case, but in 1999

menace commitment to stadiums in Berlin and Leipzig. Moreover, the Fifa voters will feel the warmth of Deutsche Fussball-Bund (DFB) hospitality early in the year that matters, for January 2000 is the centenary of German football, and March 2000 is the month that the executive members decide. There will be a huge show in Leipzig, the birthplace of the DFB. Meanwhile, Germany prefers to ring out the old year in a practical manner, making December 31 the date on which its 20 aspirant World Cup cities give evidence of progress in preparing stadiums to meet Fifa demands.

Franz Beckenbauer, seldom reluctant to remind Fifa members that Germany stuck to the gentleman's agreement that England broke — namely that the DFB supported Euro '96 in England, in return for which Sir Bert Millichip, the then Football Association chairman, pledged support for Germany 2006 — has questioned South Africa's scope to put on a safe, competent World Cup. But Beckenbauer hears, as other insiders do, that Brazil has powerful backing.

The Brazilian bid is there in writing, despite the fact that Ricardo Teixeira, its football president, son-in-law of Joao Havelange, the recently-retired Fifa president, neglected to inform the government in Brasilia that the intention was for real. The dilapidated stadiums in Brazil, and the need for a \$41 billion (£24.7 billion) International Monetary Fund loan to the country, suggest that, sooner rather than later, those planning such a costly venture will seek government support.

Heavy politics, however, can rebound. England hopes that, come voting day, Graham Kelly, Keith Wiseman and the FA millions will be forgotten, but some FIFA "accusers" have long maintained: "England's long-standing government support is its trump card," one member scoffed. "Well, we haven't forgotten Tony Blair and Jack Cunningham accusing us of a cosy stitch up to hijack support for Germany. Maybe they were misled by the FA denials over the gentleman's agreement, or maybe they were just trying to win a different election."

THE CONTENDERS

Brazil
Germany
Morocco
England
Egypt
Ghana
South Africa

Mandela hands over the presidency and the emotional value of his presence will begin to ebb away.

That will, to some extent, level the playing field for England and other contenders. It should come down to a basic calculation of the quality of each country's infrastructure and ability to organise a 64-match tournament — a quality that England has in depth. However, those who know FIFA politics must still be aware that South Africa has influence where it counts, inside the committee, and that Germany has the strength of insiders in most meaningful football structures, strength that England has failed to maintain.

Alex McGivern, director of England's 2006 campaign, finished 1998 as he began his criticism of Germany's conservative lack of government support. There is a misconception here, the German government blessed the bid in 1993 and, while it was unlikely to give priority to spending towards a future World Cup during a general-election year, it was not against widespread post-war unemployment, the new government has since announced in-



Johnson appears shy but put him on the pitch and the aggressive, confident Antipodean emerges. Photograph: Richard Pohle

Johnson lets feet do the talking

Russell Kempson meets the Watford player trying to shoot down Tottenham

Richard Johnson, the Watford midfielder player, is not an archetypal Australian. "G'day, mate" and "No worries" do not feature in his vocabulary and he doesn't mention, let alone boast over, the pre-Melbourne humiliation of the England cricket team.

He might have a mother called 'Sheela' but he appears quiet, almost shy — the antithesis of the loud, dimie-puzzling Antipodean of dubious descent so loved by whingeing Poms the world over.

Johnson, 24, speaks softly, his voice magnified only by the echo in dressing-room No 1 at the club's training ground in Stanmore, Middlesex. He is courteous, attentive and admits only one concession to brashness — the black BMW Z3 Roadster parked outside. It has caused him grief from envious team-mates but the jealous jibes have long since subsided.

"I got my first decent contract in March so I went out and treated myself," he said. "I've wanted a long time for a nice car. It goes well and although I got a lot of stick from the lads who thought I was bit flash, it didn't really bother me. It's a great car."

Appearances are often deceptive. Put Johnson on a football pitch and the real Aussie emerges — the confident, aggressive competitor who played rugby league at school with Andrew and Matthew Johns, the Australia internationals. He received his fifth booking of the

season in the 1-1 draw against Norwich City on Tuesday and will shortly take a one-match break at the Football Association's pleasure.

Yet two beside any defenders who stand off, allowing him the merest sight of goal from any range or angle. One of his four goals this season was described as a "35-yard right-footed screamer", another as "a thundering drive from 20 yards". Another was "hammered home from 20 yards". Johnson laughs, perplexed and almost embarrassed at his ballistic expertise.

"I've had a few of those," he said. "I used to score a lot of goals from distance in Australia. Left foot, right foot, but usually the right. I don't really know why but I seem to have the knack." Scoring with a two-yard tap-in is a recurring dream, rarely fulfilled.

Tottenham Hotspur will testify to his aim. On Jürgen Klinsmann's debut, in a pre-season friendly at Vicarage Road in 1994, Johnson scored with a 35-yard special in the 1-1 draw. Those at White Hart Lane who recall its velocity will be wise to advise George Graham, the

Tottenham manager, before Watford travel to North London in the FA Cup third round tomorrow.

It is a trip that will revive many memories for Johnson, who arrived in England as a wide-eyed teenager eight years ago. He spent three months on trial with Tottenham but was deemed surplus to requirements. "I thought I'd done really well but they told me I wasn't any better than what they had there already," he said. "As it turned out, I was probably better off leaving."

Football is in the Johnson blood. His father, Roy, and mother lived in Preston before emigrating in 1968. Johnson Sr was an apprentice with Preston North End

until he moved Down Under after answering an advertisement for players to help form a new league. He started with Sydney Croatia but settled in northern New South Wales on the country's east coast.

Johnson Jr grew up in Kurri Kurri, a town amid the coalfields around Newcastle, in which his father worked, and the vineyards of Hunter Valley. Sport dominated his curriculum at St Peter's Boys' School: he played in the state un-



der-21 league when he was 15 but his education suffered. "I was useless," he said. "It was not for me."

"I wasn't doing any good at school. Dad sat me down one day and said: 'If you want to make anything of yourself in football, England is the best place to be.' So I just packed my bags and got on the plane. If I'd really thought about what I was doing, I'd probably have had second thoughts. I'm glad I didn't."

A dual national, with English and Australian passports, Johnson will become further anglicised when he marries Vanessa Martin — a lovely Essex girl from Southend — in June 2000. Yet he is still miffed that he played no part in Australia's World Cup qualifying campaign, ultimately fruitless though it was.

He was watched by scouts of Terry Venables, the then Australia coach, but the call never arrived. This was possibly a consequence of the apparent antipathy between Venables and Graham Taylor, the Watford and former England manager.

"I don't know if that had anything to do with it," he said. "I hope not. It was disappointing because I'd been playing really well."

Johnson has not given up hope of international recognition and even if Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, were to call first, he would consider the offer. It might not please the boys back in Kurri Kurri but Hoddle would receive a warm response. No worries.

Old Firm remain Nevin's title spur

By PHIL GORDON

WHEN Pat Nevin left Kilmarnock for Motherwell three months ago, there were plenty of people prepared to tell him he was taking a step down. The upwardly-mobile Motherwell player-chief executive might use this afternoon to argue that both clubs are going in the same direction.

Nevin was drawn to Fir Park by his ambitions for the club, as much as his personal one. Yet, the man dubbed the game's first punk footballer is enough of a romantic to hope that his former and present teams are laying foundations for a genuine challenge to the Old Firm.

It is appropriate that the first football of 1999 should be at Fir Park between these clubs, because both symbolise the brave new era that is being nourished by the Scottish Premier League (SPL). Both are benefitting from the £44 million of Sky Tele-

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	20	13	4	3	37	17	43
Kilmarnock	20	10	7	3	28	11	37
Celtic	20	9	6	5	24	20	33
St Johnstone	21	7	9	5	24	27	30
Motherwell	21	6	8	7	20	27	26
Aberdeen	21	6	6	9	22	29	24
Hearts	21	6	5	10	22	29	23
Dundee	20	6	5	9	19	29	23
Dundee Utd	21	7	10	19	26	19	23
Cunliffe	21	2	11	8	17	33	17

vision money that is dripping down through the SPL to smaller clubs to help them catch up on Celtic and Rangers, and both have contributed to the 11 per cent increase in attendances reported by the SPL.

Kilmarnock, in second place, may possess the points that Motherwell crave, but Nevin believes that Motherwell's people power will soon be a source of envy.

"We're attracting thousands of fans back to Fir Park through the price reduction policy implemented by our chairman, John Boyle," he said. "The most heartening aspect of that has been the kids who are coming. If we can catch them at a young age and get them in support us, rather than Celtic or Rangers, then this club has a chance of growing. Kilmarnock copied our move and got 14,000 people two weeks ago."

Motherwell underlined their ambition by yesterday signing Lee McCulloch on a new three-year contract. The Scotland Under-21 forward scored the equaliser at Aberdeen on Tuesday night that helped Motherwell into fifth place.

Kilmarnock know that victory is essential. Closing the gap on Rangers to three points just 48 hours before the Old Firm do battle would send out a signal that they do not intend to give Dick Advocaat's team an easy passage.

Beardsley comes home to Hartlepool

By GEORGE CAULKIN

WHEN Peter Beardsley embarked on his career as a professional footballer two decades ago, the Berlin Wall was intact. Margaret Thatcher held the keys to 10 Downing Street and the Soviet Union had not yet been consigned to the history books. By signing for his tenth club yesterday, the former England international could reasonably claim to have aged better than most.

The same cannot be said of his latest port of call, however. When Beardsley scored a hat-trick on his debut for Carlisle United's reserve team in August 1979, Hartlepool United were preparing for another season of mediocrity in the old fourth division and, while the name may have altered, the remains there still. Beardsley's signing — initially until the end of the season — represents a timely coup. After an unhappy spell with Bolton Wanderers and a brief reunion with

TRANSFER TRAIL

Aug 1979: John Carlisle Ltd (free) from Walsall Boys Club.
April 1982: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £275,000.
Sept 1982: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £200,000.
March 1983: Return to Walsall on a free transfer.
Sept 1983: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £150,000.
July 1987: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £1.5m.
Aug 1987: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £1m.
June 1988: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £1.5m.
Aug 1988: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £1.5m.
Feb 1989: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £1.5m.
March 1989: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £1.5m.
Dec 1989: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £1.5m.
Jan 1990: John Carlisle Whitecaps for £1.5m.

Kevin Keegan at Fulham, he also returns the favour to his native North East, a significant lure given that his family have remained in the region since his second transfer from Newcastle United — for £450,000 last year. "It's great to be back," he said yesterday. With Hartlepool down to twenty-first in the table after five consecutive defeats, Beardsley's arrival, immediately prompted fevered speculation

as to the long-term future of Mick Tait, the club's present manager. A section of supporters have called for Tait's head, in recent weeks, although circumstances conspire to suggest that Beardsley will not be his eventual successor. The pair became friends while playing together at Carlisle and though Beardsley had a chance to return to Brunton Park — he had a series of discussions with Michael Knighton, the Carlisle chairman, three weeks ago and was widely expected to become Nigel Pearson's first signing — it was that personal bond which proved the stronger.

"I was lucky enough to play with the boss at Carlisle and he really looked after me then. This is a way to try to help repay him," Beardsley said. Having made little secret of his desire to enter management he also attempted to deflect the inevitable gossip regarding his position. "As long as Mick is here, I'll be here as a player."



Beardsley: love of football

While nothing formal is enshrined in his contract, there will also be a brief to encourage Hartlepool's fledgling players, perhaps in the hope that some of Beardsley's magic will rub off. "The club has put a lot of time and money into developing the youth side and I am looking forward to working with the young players, not only in the first team but also in the reserves and youth team," he said.

Some will suggest that scrambling about at the foot of the League is an undignified resting place for a man who has won 59 international caps, captained his country and won a host of trophies with Liverpool, as well as finding time to play for Everton, Newcastle, Manchester United and Manchester City via Vancouver Whitecaps and Walsall Boys' Club. Why humiliate himself, they will ask?

The answer will be provided by a packed St James' Park later this month when Newcastle entertain Celtic for Beardsley's testimonial game and by the few hundred extra souls present for the visit of Cambridge United to Victoria Park tomorrow. All would mention qualities such as exuberance, enthusiasm and a love of football. This, after all, is man who still talks of "doing better" as a player. "I've got a few years to go yet," Beardsley, who celebrates his 38th birthday later this month, said.

Altrincham's management team preaching caution

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL
By WALTER GAMMIE

IN THE best traditions of cautious-minded football folk, Bernard Taylor and Graham Heathcote are approaching the new year without making any extravagant predictions for Altrincham. The temptation must have been strong because their side has swept to the top of the UniBond League with 12 victories and two draws in their past 15 matches.

"We've still got the hard part to come," Taylor, the manager, said. "There is still half the season to go. We've got to get to the top five, now we've got to stay there. Any of the teams in the top five could win the league. They are all good enough. Guiseley, who we play tomorrow, have games in hand in fifth place. It's a very important match."

Yet the 3-0 win at Runcorn on Boxing Day and the 4-1 win at Moss Lane over Marine — watched by a hearteningly large crowd of 1,001 — spoke

volumes for the confidence of the team. Phil Power, fully fit and firing, scored in both matches and Leroy Chambers scored his eleventh league goal at Runcorn.

Most remarkably, Stuart Coburn, the goalkeeper, scored with a wind-assisted kick down the hill at Canal Street. The ball bounced once and over a helpless Mark Morris in the Runcorn goal. Coburn also saved a penalty, and his form has played a prominent role in the Altrincham revival.

Coburn's presence saw Andy Dibble depart on loan to Barry Town, the League of Wales champions, where he fell victim to an extraordinary injury — suffering severe burns, apparently from lime on the penalty spot, at Carmarthen Town. "We visit-

ed him in hospital," Taylor said. "He's in good spirits, but he's had a skin graft to his chest, and it may be a long time before he plays again."

Dibble's misfortune aside, things appear much brighter for a club that gleaned only four points from its first eight matches. With a ground equipped for the Football League, Altrincham had not hidden their ambition of regaining the Football Conference place lost two seasons ago — but the time spent by Nigel Gieghorn and Brian Kilcline as player-coaches failed to have the desired effect.

The upturn in Altrincham's fortunes coincided with Heathcote taking over the coaching duties at a club with which he has been involved since 1970. "The spirit in the dressing-room is as good as I have known," he said. "It helps when you're winning — but the job is only half done."

ICE HOCKEY

Devils are stung by busier Bees

By NORMAN DE MESSQUITA

CARDIFF DEVILS once again missed out on an opportunity yesterday to maintain their challenge for the Sekonda Superleague, beaten 4-0 by Bracknell Bees in their second successive home defeat.

Two goals apiece from Chris Brant and Paxton Schulte did the job for Bracknell and Richard Gallace, on loan from Slough Jets because of injury to Bracknell's two regular goalkeepers, did much to deny Cardiff.

Bracknell were faster, stronger, more determined and better at all the basic skills than the Devils, who gave what must have been one of their worst performances of the season.

Brant's first goal came after four minutes when he showed sufficient determination to pick up his own rebound and lift it over Derek Herlofson. Less than four minutes later Schulte completed a neat three-way play with Jeff Johnston and Dale Junkin to make it 2-0.

The only goal of the second period came when Bracknell were on power play and Brant shot from the blue line was deflected by Schulte.

The Cardiff power play once again showed its ineptitude and failed to score on any of their six-man advantage opportunities. The nearest they came was when Doug McEwen missed an open net



McEwen, of Bracknell Bees, finds himself rendered airborne by the loose stick of Menard, of Cardiff Devils. But it was the Devils who ultimately landed with a bump

when the Devils were on their first power play in the first period and, early in the third, when Steve Thornton shot wide of an open net. A breakaway early in the third period saw Brant complete the scoring for the evening and the only disappointing aspect from Bracknell's point of view came with less than five minutes remaining when Norm Bezaide objected to a slashing penalty,



McEwen, of Bracknell Bees, finds himself rendered airborne by the loose stick of Menard, of Cardiff Devils. But it was the Devils who ultimately landed with a bump

which was more than justified, by throwing his stick at the referee, for which he received a misconduct penalty and took no further part in proceedings. Bracknell move up into fourth place.

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CHANGING TIMES

50 (من الكتب)

RACING: JOCKEY PUTS TROUBLES BEHIND HIM

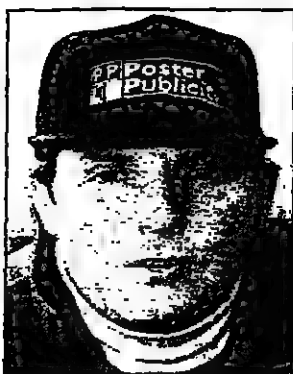
Maguire ends year on winning note

ADRIAN MAGUIRE has endured a traumatic week, but he ended the year on a high note with a superb winning ride on Arctic Ground in the Mr & Mrs Tidball Novices' Handicap Hurdle at Warwick yesterday.

Maguire resigned his retainers with David Nicholson's stable two days ago, but he will have no problem in retaining his position among the country's top jockeys.

His popularity has never been more evident, and, having been immediately congratulated by fellow rider, Norman Williamson, as they pulled up, he received a great reception from racegoers on his return to the winner's enclosure.

He did not ride in the following two races but, as he walked out to partner River Bay, who finished second to Cardinal Rule, ridden by Williamson, in the Next Year's The Big Handicap Chase, he said: "It was nice to get a good reception from the



Webber: long-range double

crowd. And it was good to be back among the winners. After all, riding winners is what it is all about."

Arctic Ground was struggling down the far side, but Maguire was at his usual determined best, and, having pinched a good run on the inside on the home turn, he forced Arctic Ground past Supreme Troglodyte approaching the final flight and they

went 3½ lengths clear at the line.

Winning trainer Paul Webber was at Fontwell, where he was also successful with John Drumm, but his wife, Fiona, said: "It was great to have Adrian on board. 'We had a pretty quiet time until about three weeks ago when the horses suddenly came good."

Nicky Henderson's horses are in cracking form too and Premier Generation gave him his twelfth success in the past 15 days, under Mick Fitzgerald, in the Tiny Tim Novices' Hurdle. Reflecting on the stable's good run, Henderson said: "We're keeping the doctor away and long may it continue. We're not doing anything different, the horses just seem well."

Naive Charm made it two out of three this term in the Bob Cratchit Novices' Chase, while Henry Daily moved off the 13-year for the season when Young Spartacus landed the 49th Christmas Present Handicap Hurdle.

LEICESTER

THUNDERER
12.45 Bora Bora, 1.15 Catharine's Way, 1.50 Round Robin, 2.20 Shanavogh, 2.50 Padara, 3.25 Bessie Browne.

GOING: HEAVY (CHASE COURSE GOOD TO SOFT) SIS
7.30AM INSPECTION

12.45 HUMBERSTONE NOVICES HURDLE

(£2,392: 2m 4f 110y) (4 runners)
1. 2P13 BORA BORA 15 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-7 T. Jones
2. 4B1050 22 M. T. Davies 5-11-7 T. Jones
3. 1P101 22 M. T. Davies 5-11-7 T. Jones
4. 406 SAINT JOE 17 D. Shaw 5-11-6 J. A. McCarthy

6-4 Bora Bora, 2-1 Happy Hussar, 3-1 Bessie Browne, 5-1 Saint Joe.

1.15 NEW YEAR NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE

(£3,496: 2m 10f) (5)
1. 421 CATHARINE'S WAY 24 (5) A. T. Jones 5-11-7 J. Harvey
2. 1W4 SILVER SPROCKET 23 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 M. T. Davies
3. 1P101 22 M. T. Davies 5-11-7 T. Jones
4. 406 SAINT JOE 17 D. Shaw 5-11-6 J. A. McCarthy
5. 5310 THE LADY SONGS 25 (5) D. Shaw 5-11-6 J. A. McCarthy

10-11 Catharine's Way, 5-2 Happy Hussar, 10-11 Bessie Browne, 5-1 Saint Joe, 10-11 The Lady Songs.

1.50 PARSLEY SELLING HURDLE

(£1,842: 2m) (5)
1. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)
2. 2303 HUNTER ROBIN 15 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)
3. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)
4. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)
5. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)

10-11 Prince of Pearl, 7-4 Hunter Robin, 5-1 Bessie Browne, 12-1 Hunter Robin, 25-1 Prince of Pearl.

LINGFIELD PARK

THUNDERER
1.05 Muhands, 1.30 Daunted, 2.05 Such Boldness, 2.40 Jubilee Scholar, 3.15 Shebassh, 3.45 Cornetothefog.

GOING: STANDARD DRAW: 6F-1M, LOW BEST SIS

1.05 HANGOVER HANDICAP

(£2,185: 1m 4f) (15 runners)
1. 113 WALES 11 (10) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 J. Harvey
2. 104 SPARK AND SPARK 27 (10) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 J. Harvey
3. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)
4. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)
5. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)

10-11 Wales, 10-11 Spark and Spark, 10-11 Prince of Pearl, 10-11 Prince of Pearl, 10-11 Prince of Pearl.

1.30 NEW YEAR STAKES (3-Y-O: £2,680: 1m) (9)

1. 321-DAUNTED 13 (10) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 J. Harvey
2. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)
3. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)
4. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)
5. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)

7-2 Daunted, 3-1 An Exciting Day, 5-2 Prince of Pearl, 5-1 Prince of Pearl, 10-11 Prince of Pearl.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: P. Hester, 21 winners from 110 runners, 15.5% M. T. Davies, 55 from 311, 17.7%, M. T. Davies, 45 from 250, 15.5%, M. T. Davies, 10 from 65, 15.4%, A. Jones, 9 from 67, 13.4%.

JOCKEYS: P. Hester, 5 winners from 25 rides, 20.0%, M. T. Davies, 45 from 146, 17.4%, D. Shaw, 23 from 155, 15.0%, S. Whitcomb, 55 from 357, 15.4%, C. Carter, 30 from 225, 13.3%.

2.20 WISTON HANDICAP CHASE

(£7,328: 2m 4f 110y) (5)
1. 323 SARK LIGHT 23 (10) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 J. Harvey
2. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)
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2.50 FORD MAIDEN CHASE

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3.25 GLEBE HANDICAP HURDLE

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1-2 Prince of Pearl, 7-2 Check the Deck, 11-4 Sark Light, 14-1 Sark Light, 50-1 Sark Light.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: M. T. Davies, 4 winners from 110 runners, 15.5% M. T. Davies, 55 from 311, 17.7%, M. T. Davies, 45 from 250, 15.5%, M. T. Davies, 10 from 65, 15.4%, A. Jones, 9 from 67, 13.4%.

JOCKEYS: M. T. Davies, 5 winners from 25 rides, 20.0%, M. T. Davies, 45 from 146, 17.4%, D. Shaw, 23 from 155, 15.0%, S. Whitcomb, 55 from 357, 15.4%, C. Carter, 30 from 225, 13.3%.

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2.05 AULD LANG SYNE MAIDEN STAKES

(£3,680: 1m 2f) (9)
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5. 000 PRINCE OF PEARL 16 (5) M. T. Davies 5-11-6 A. C. Coyle (5)

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2.40 FIRST FOOTING CLASSIFIED STAKES

(£2,068: 1m 2f) (8)
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3.15 WELCOME TO 1999 HANDICAP

(3-Y-O: £3,518: 7f) (5)
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3.45 HAPPY NEW YEAR HANDICAP

(£2,708: 6f) (12)
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COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: P. Hester, 21 winners from 110 runners, 15.5% M. T. Davies, 55 from 311, 17.7%, M. T. Davies, 45 from 250, 15.5%, M. T. Davies, 10 from 65, 15.4%, A. Jones, 9 from 67, 13.4%.

JOCKEYS: P. Hester, 5 winners from 25 rides, 20.0%, M. T. Davies, 45 from 146, 17.4%, D. Shaw, 23 from 155, 15.0%, S. Whitcomb, 55 from 357, 15.4%, C. Carter, 30 from 225, 13.3%.

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YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Warwick
Going: good to soft, soft in places; hurdle: soft.

12.50 (2m 4f 110y) 1. PREMIER GENERATION (M. A. Fitzgerald) 11-10 fav. Time: 2m 4f 11.0s. 2. Arctic Ground (A. Maguire) 11-10 fav. Time: 2m 4f 11.0s. 3. Supreme Troglodyte (N. Williamson) 11-10 fav. Time: 2m 4f 11.0s. 4. Cardinal Rule (N. Williamson) 11-10 fav. Time: 2m 4f 11.0s. 5. Young Spartacus (M. T. Davies) 11-10 fav. Time: 2m 4f 11.0s.

1.50 (2m 10f) 1. NATIVE CHARM (A. Maguire) 11-10 fav. Time: 2m 10f 11.0s. 2. Naive Charm (A. Maguire) 11-10 fav. Time: 2m 10f 11.0s. 3. Naive Charm (A. Maguire) 11-10 fav. Time: 2m 10f 11.0s. 4. Naive Charm (A. Maguire) 11-10 fav. Time: 2m 10f 11.0s. 5. Naive Charm (A. Maguire) 11-10 fav. Time: 2m 10f 11.0s.

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PLUMPTON	103	203
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EXETER	105	205
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POP 1

THE TIMES

ARTS

POP 2

Beth Orton:
one to watch
in 1999

PAGE 31



Kenneth Tynan, with typical swagger, once defined critics as people "who know the way but can't drive the car". Well, it's a point of view — though I fear that if artists and performers started asking critics for directions the Car of Culture would be pranged into the Ditch of Delicacy before you could say "oh Calcutta". But if a critic isn't going to pretend to "know the way" on New Year's Day — especially at the start of this Year of Living Millennially — then he never will. So, as you wait for the ritual four aspirins to soothe the throb in your morning-after cranium, let me divert you with a little Janus-like reflection.

Two things strike me about the cultural revolution of the 1990s. The first is that it is a revolution. Satellite, cable, digital and now interactive television, the home computer and the Internet — all these have changed leisure habits irrevocably, especially among the under-30s. Sorting out the implications will be the biggest task facing cultural mandarins and showbiz moguls alike in the next decade. That is, if they want to keep their jobs. Already you can sense the

We went through all this a century ago

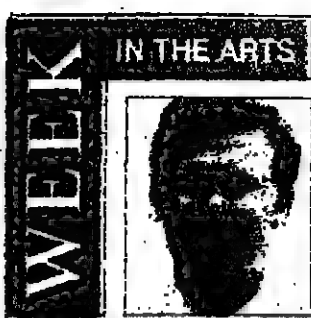
panic and the fear as the big entertainment corporations scramble frantically to "police" the Net. That's not surprising. To many people over 40 the pace of this huge technological upheaval is bewildering. The silicon merry-go-round whirrs ever faster, but what's it got to do with real life? And what will become of "real" culture — live music, fine books, good conversation — when a little square screen defines our intellectual horizons?

These are commonly expressed worries. So let me make a second, slightly more consoling point. The world has seen all this before. Indeed, there are curious parallels between the cultural mood of the 1990s and the 1890s.

Consider this. In the 1890s, too, ordinary lives underwent a bewildering technological metamorphosis. Much of it was due to electricity, which (like the Internet in our era) had been kicking around academic circles for years, but was suddenly harnessed by inventors

of genius in ways that transformed day-to-day existence. Electric cookers, toasters and kettles all appeared in the 1890s; the vacuum cleaner in 1901. Telephone subscriber dialling was invented in 1896; nine years later Britain had half a million telephones. Marconi sent a radio signal pinging across the Channel in 1898; Ford built his first petrol-driven car in 1893. As Wordsworth might have written, to be young in that decade must have been very heaven. But to be middle-aged must have been alarming. "Sir, I have tested your machine," Sir Herbert Beerhohn wrote to the maker of another 1890s "fad", the gramophone. "It adds new terror to life and makes death a long-felt want."

So a hundred years ago we find much the same technological generation-gap as exists today. But there is an even more pertinent observation to be made about that decade: almost nobody came close to predicting the Big Bang in mass



RICHARD MORRISON

entertainment that electricity would bring. That wasn't for want of prophecy: after all, H.G. Wells wrote his best sci-fi yarns in the 1890s. But who could foresee how the Lumière brothers' flickering experiments with moving pictures in a little Paris room would spawn the biggest entertainment industry in history within 15 years? Or how Marconi's cross-Channel bleeps

would lead, just two decades later, to symphonies and speeches being heard in a million homes at once? We stand in much the same relationship to computer science today as those late Victorians stood to electricity. We know we have a powerful new cultural tool, but we delude ourselves if we think we have even the foggiest notion of what wondrous new modes of expression it may spawn. All we can sense is that somewhere, perhaps not yet born, there is a genius who will shape this new medium into a form capable of stirring profound emotions — just as Hollywood's brilliant pioneers quickly evolved "truth 24 times a second" (in Jean-Luc Godard's phrase) out of the Lumière's primitive shadow-play.

But what of the fear that the "living arts" will wither, as the home-entertainment revolution nurtures a generation of couch-potatoes? Again, I take comfort from history. When cinema arrived, pessimists said it would kill live theatre; just

as the gramophone would kill live music. Similarly, television was expected to kill cinema. "Why should people pay good money to see bad films when they can see bad television for nothing?" Sam Goldwyn asked gloomily in 1956.

Yet all survived. The truth is that old art forms rarely die; they merely fade into repeat-mode. Original expression becomes harder and harder; the temptation to refer continually back to a heritage of proven masterpieces, like Orpheus fatally glancing back at Eurydice, becomes ever stronger.

You can see this even in the art forms invented in our century. Last year's big films — a disaster movie and an epic cartoon — could easily have been conceived (if not executed) in Hollywood's earliest years. Television is still obsessed with game-show, cop-drama and soap-opera formats concocted in the Fifties. As for pop music, experts tell us every

week that it is "eating itself" — raiding its back-catalogue with rapacious haste. Little wonder, then, that youngsters are attracted to a medium with no burden of historical "baggage" — the computer. Of course it is more difficult to evaluate the worth of a new medium, to distinguish gimmicks from the truly imaginative. Many will side with John Updike, who sourly observed that modern man is "conditioned to accept newness, whatever it costs". But the mark of civilised individuals is surely that they quickly reject novelty if it has no integrity of content or purpose.

That is as true today as it was for the Victorians, who also struggled to measure integrity in a fast-changing world. Back in 1869 Matthew Arnold declared that the chief task of culture was to "beget a dissatisfaction" with "the common tide of man's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community", and to "save the future from being vulgarised, even if it cannot save the present". No doubt of "vulgarity" have doubtless changed a bit since 1869. Even so, that's not a bad thought to carry into a new year, or a brave new technological world.

The voices Stalin couldn't gag

UNSUNG HEROES: In the last of our series, Benedict Nightingale salutes the courageous dissident playwrights of the Soviet Union

If you wish to feel serious rage on the theatre's behalf, may I suggest the following exercise? Read Isaac Babel's *Myra*, Nikolai Erdman's *Suicide* and Yevgeny Shvarts's *Dragon*. Then ponder the proceedings of the first Soviet Writers' Conference in 1934. Then take an incredulous look at Nikolai Pogodin's *Aristocrats*, which was swiftly proclaimed the dramatic "classic" of the other plays never had a chance of becoming. Thanks to the oppression of the worst, the fate of the best was to be unsung, cast out, even murdered.

For a few years after the Bolshevik coup the Russian theatre led the world in energy and innovation. Handsome subsidies combined with relative permissiveness to give the ageing Stanislavsky, the young Meyerhold and other producers the opportunity to stage dramatists as diverse as Gorky and Mayakovsky, author of that fierce satire on greed and corruption in the Soviet state, *The Bedbug*.

But in the later 1920s the apparatchiks were already powerful enough to get Bulgakov's *White Guard* withdrawn, for the crime of portraying the class enemy as less than villainous, and his *Flight* banned. And by 1934 Stalin's mighty rump had descended on the theatre, crushing all originality, all creativity.

That was when Uncle Joe's cronies, Andrei Zhdanov, approvingly quoted his master's dictum that writers were "engineers of human souls", explaining that "socialist realism" must replace "bourgeois mysticism, superstition and pornography", and suggesting that the new heroes should be "men and women, collective farmers, engineers and members of the Young Communist League". It was also the year when Pogodin decided to treat a tricky subject: the building of the White Sea Canal by the inmates of what was, as it happens, one of Stalin's most notorious labour camps.

Never can there have been a more ideologically correct play than *Aristocrats*. Thanks to an abundance of food and recreation and the sensitivity of a commandant who combines the qualities of Scoutmaster, therapist and playground leader, hard cases confess their sins and become wild-enthusiasts for progress, rushing off to dig their canal like kids building sandcastles.

Even supposed incorrigibles end up weeping with manly gratitude and tossing the principal Checkist in a blanket, while he dispenses useful moral advice. "The forces that have drawn these people into socialist work are operating with unheard-of daring, with true Bolshevik austerity, and on the

broad scale Comrade Stalin has taught us."

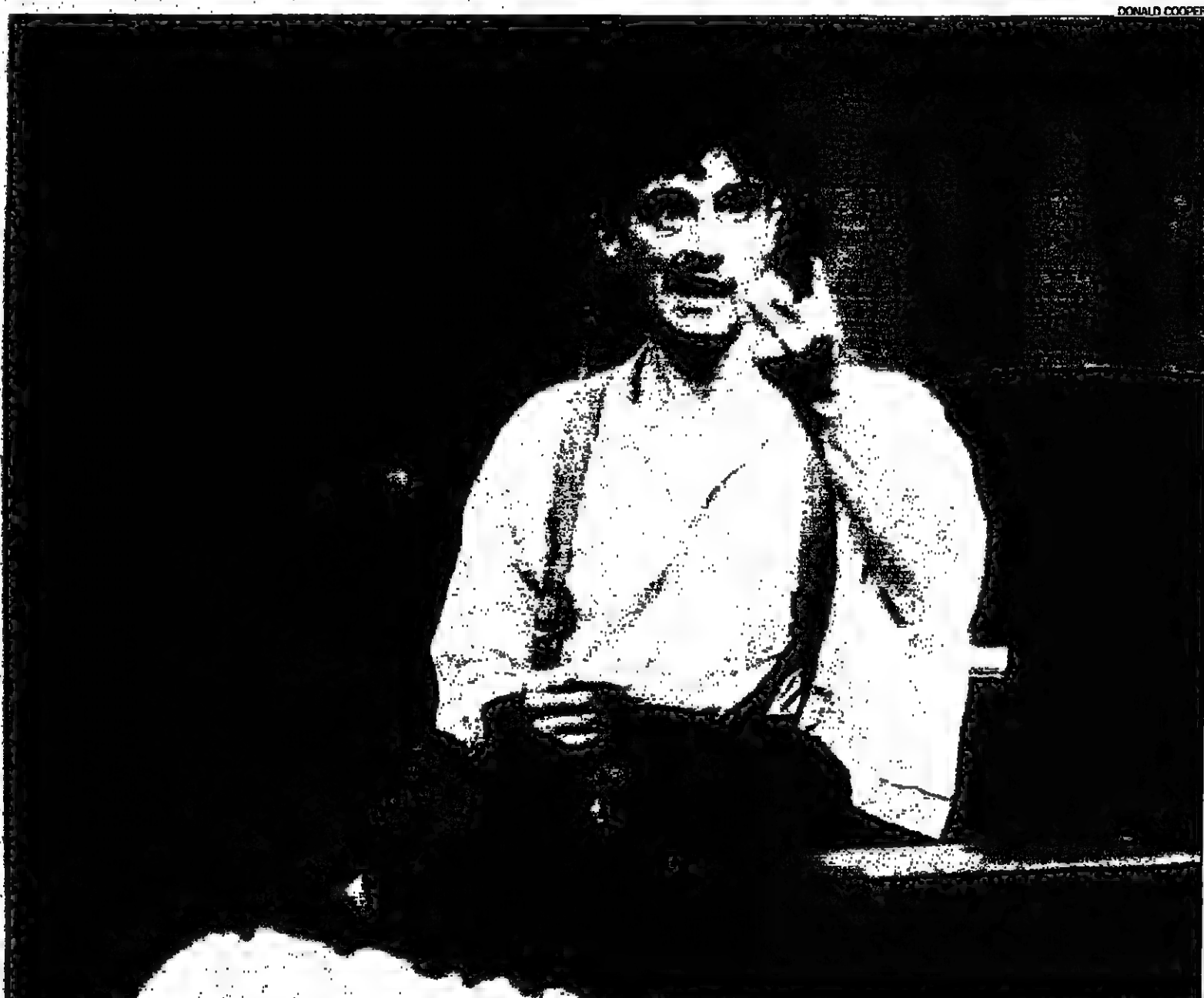
In the real world, a rather truer Bolshevik austerity was already claiming its victims. Mayakovsky had shot himself. Gorky was soon to die in suspicious circumstances, Erdman to be exiled, Bulgakov forced to take a menial job. Shvarts to camouflage his views in fairy-stories, Meyerhold and Babel to be tortured and killed. Others embraced what Babel wittily called "the genre of silence". The loss is incalculable in both the literal and the cliché sense. It is as if James I had taken as strongly against the theatre as against tobacco and smothered Jacobean tragedy in its cradle.

But there are three playwrights who in my view deserve especially to be mourned: three whose dramatic requests, sadly few though they are, should be remembered and revived far more often than is now the case.

What naive madness impelled Stanislavsky to ask Stalin to override his State Censorship Committee's ban on Erdman's *Suicide*? Given its subversive tenor, it is hardly surprising that the dictator wrote back agreeing with those who found the play "empty and even harmful".

Its anti-hero, driven to the brink of self-slaughter by the unemployment and beset by malcontents chivvying him to kill himself as a public protest against their own disappointments, doesn't just phone the Kremlin to tell "him in charge" he hates Marx. He ends up begging the powers-that-be "in the name of millions the freedom to whisper, just whisper that life is hard".

Back in 1979 an RSC production of the play showed it to be quirky, energetic and funny



Final gesture of despair: Roger Rees plays the central role in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1980 production of Nikolai Erdman's play *The Suicide*

enough to justify Gorky's claim that Erdman was "our new Gogol", but in Russia it was as if it had never existed. The new Gogol disappeared into "a poky little hole of a room with a bunk and a tiny table" in the provinces and never wrote for the theatre again. Yet at least he survived into the 1970s, unlike the even more brilliantly gifted Babel, who was summarily executed

in 1940 after being arrested on charges of spying that 15 years later the Soviet authorities themselves admitted to have been trumped up.

To understand Babel the lively, impractical, generous man, read Antonina Pirozhkova's *At His Side*, which is his widow's account of his last years and the decade she spent trying to discover whether he was alive or dead. And to

gauge the quality of the talent that was wasted, sample his plays *Sundown* and *Myra*. Both team with offbeat observation, but the latter is indisputably a masterpiece, in which black-marketeers, prostitutes, drunken army officers and bewildered representatives of old and new orders giddily wander the chaotic Petrograd of 1920. You won't be surprised to learn that the piece

was banned while it was in rehearsal in 1935.

Shvarts was luckier. At least nobody stopped him writing his children's stories; at least he died a natural death in 1958. But his wonderfully inventive "children's plays for adults", *The Naked King*, *The Shadow* and *The Dragon*, were all taken off as soon as they were staged (respectively 1935, 1940 and 1944). They

were well enough coded for the apparatchiks to believe that the despotic regimes they described were to be found in Nazi Germany or the West. Yet there must have been something about the opportunity and terrified loathes littering Shvarts's plots that made the censors wary.

They were right. To enter the sinister, paranoid world of *The Shadow* — the king's ministers find it safest to converse in shattering half-sentences while pretending to play chess in the open air — is to experience the danger and unpredictability of Stalinism.

And *The Dragon*, in which Lancelot comes to rid a town of the reptilian tyrant, is even more suggestive. The citizens love their master as much as he despises them. As the monster says: "Cut a man's body in half and he'll peg out. But break his spirit and he'll eat out of your hand. In my town you'll find spirits without arms or legs, spirits in chains, threadbare spirits, dead spirits. I know because I've crippled them."

Even today *The Dragon* remains a touchy play in Russia. You can see why. It shows the awful success of Stalin's human engineering. It shows a slavishness, a craving for a Strong Man, so ingrained that ordinary political surgery cannot remove it. No wonder Shvarts died, as Erdman and Babel did, one of the unsung heroes of the century.

I flee through flaws, in the flu

Being busier than our counterparts in any country I know, British theatre critics are apt to confuse the fictions flowing through their heads and start reviewing their dreams. But never was that more likely for me than this week, when flu struck.

Did I really see dozens of little spiders fall from the ceiling above me with squeaks of "We like you"? Yes, I did, when I caught *Charlotte's Web* at the Polka. Was I asleep when I was surrounded by kids repetitively screaming "We're not scared" in a Lilliputian version of a Nutcracker rally? No, that happened at the Unicorn Theatre's *Hansel and Gretel* in the Arts. Did I actually eat mince pies with Her Majesty on a sunbaked lawn at Bal-

moral? Sadly, that was the dream.

Mark you, Stuart Paterston's version of Grimm felt far more dreamlike than that. Actually, it resembled the sort of feverish nightmare celebrated in a famous song in *Johanne*. So much did he elaborate the simple if evocative tale of Hansel and Gretel, their wicked stepmother, their cowardly father, their witch and her oven that I would not have been shocked if W.S. Gilbert's ravenous horde of friends and relations had come pouring aboard at Sloane Square or South Kensington stations.

As it was, the lost children encountered the members of a small circus in the forest. And these supposedly friendly people led Hansel and Gretel to the wicked witch's cot-

kind or appear to be in trouble.

A more advertent theme is the search for the father, who emerges from his three incarnations here as a well-meaning but helpless figure, much victimised by nasty women in black.

But does this clarify or obfuscate a good Grimm tale? Perhaps because they were clearer-minded than me, the children in the audience seemed happy; but I found the piece almost as cluttered as the set, which inexplicably consists of piles of books, and even more so than the face of Andrew McDonald's Fairy King, which is so festooned with blackening leaves that it looks as if he has developed Dutch Elm Disease.

Joseph Robinette version of E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*

makes a much more lucid, accessible evening. Nor can you accuse a play about a piglet saved from the knackers by a wily spider of lacking imagination. It is, I suppose, a bit cliche, although Neil Sneye's pink, porcine Wilbur is perky enough for that not to matter. It is also a mine didactic, although not in the way one would expect nowadays, since White takes a true carnivore's relish in confronting the tots with the reality of a food-chain that extends to Olivia Carruthers's mild Charlotte: "I eat flies. I drink their blood. It's the way I'm made."

Overall, a tribute to pigs and arachnids that should appeal to people too.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Youth comes to the rescue

Although illness forced a complete change in the Wigmore Hall's penultimate concert of 1998, nobody in the audience can have felt let down by the replacement: stepping in for the Brindisi Quartet, the Sorrel Quartet gave a performance to sweep away old year gloom.

Counted among this country's finest young ensembles, the Sorrells — Gina McCormack, Catherine Yates, Vicki Wardman and Helen Thather — are no strangers to the Wigmore Hall, but the opportunity to hear them in masterpieces of the repertoire by Haydn, Shostakovich and Dvorak was very welcome.

Their bright tone showed itself right from the buoyant opening of Haydn's Quartet in G major, Op 33 No 3, played with soaring freedom and

RECITAL

Sorrel Quartet
Wigmore Hall

high spirits. So did the sonorous warmth that distinguishes most of their performances: all the detail Haydn packed into the first movement sounded very alive, and if intonation was sometimes less than perfect, that seemed a small price to pay for an interpretation that revelled in the work's surprising twists and turns. This was an account that revealed the Baroque roots of Haydn's Classicism, as well as pointing towards a more assertive Romanticism. The Scherzo was striking for its muscularity.

Dvorak's *American* Quartet is his most popular chamber work, a small-scale equivalent of the *New World* Symphony and about as American: apart from some pentatonic tunes, it owes everything to the composer's homesickness for his native Bohemia.

That sense of yearning dominated the Sorrells' performance, from the unknuckled beauty of the first movement to the dance rhythms of the finale. These are players who listen and react to one another, and from the moment that Wardman's dusky viola announced the initial theme and passed it over to McCormack's sweet-toned first violin it was clear that this was going to be a real conversation in music. The impassioned outpouring of their slow movement was one of the evening's highlights.

Another was the dying close of Shostakovich's Fourth Quartet, magnificently judged after the edgy desolation of the work's climax. Indeed, this darkly ambiguous piece was a well-chosen foil to the otherwise upbeat programme: written in 1949, a bad year even by Stalin's standards, it is a score that not all players get inside as well as these did here.

Their big sound was heard to best effect in the opening, which soared lyrically before delivering its sting. They were no less at home in the fragmented waltz of the Andantino, taking us into a world of shadowy nostalgia.

JOHN ALLISON

ARTS

POP GIG

Deadpan joy of New Order

How was '99 for you?

Theop artists of the year are already working on melbums that will make our lives that bit better

CATLIN
MORAN

she's had her heart smashed into brittle rubble and the result, on the forthcoming *Cast Reservation*, is an album of bitter coffee and pre-dawn helplessness. These songs take place Portland's *Perishable* at the top of the Everybody Loves This Album list.

This year also sees the release of The Beta Band's first proper album. These are the guys who refuse to do interviews and wear paper masks, and crowns in their photo-shoots. Even though I work with words and everything, it's quite hard to describe exactly what it is they do — one gets the idea that they are all into wildly obscure profanity-vinyly and gain their sustenance from the sound of nourishment from the sound of fawning borgs. But they have just got it, the It which has your spine wracking itself around your skull like a roller-blind and makes the very tips of your fingers feel numb.

Here several other contenders—aside from *Liam*. You've Been My Band, or whoever it calls it—for potential alums of 1999. Pippi Longstock-like, Beth Orton; a bit a rogue entity. Although heffugally acoustic, deez, *trai! Park*, picked up a 1997 Mercury Music Prize nomination, and earned her the soubriquet Queen of the Cumbria; one wouldn't automatically give her down as the nation's billion seller.

But On has spent her two-say alphabetical, wisely:

The Aphex Twin — or Richard James, as the estate agent would not have addressed him — bears this real name — is a law unto himself. If we imagine the music industry as the United Kingdom, then the Aphex Twin is the Isle of Man; they do things differently there. He grows a small ginger beard, yet he is a genius. He releases albums as and when he pleases, yet they are not self-indulgent whale-meat. He's been described as the Tachno Mozart, but he's really the Beatles Kraftwerk, creating melodies, spacious songs with a symphonic bent. More importantly than that, however, he's the only currently operating artist whose trying to scare his fans to death.

The video for *Come to Daddy*, which depicted a world of feral children, all with James's face, was a storming effort; but it's the current Aphex Twin calendar that will see off anyone with cardiac arrhythmia and/or psychiatric problems. The entry for June is so disturbingly evil — it's James with 36C breasts, in a white bikini, with a bloodied crotch and the face of a goblin — that half his fanbase will be on medication before the year's out. Happily, he has an album out in the summer.

Although in some ways dissimilar from the Aphex Twin—he doesn't look as if he lives inside hedges and will grab you with his gnarled feet and drag you down into Hell—Stephen Duffy also eschews the sterile environment of the studio for something a bit



Will the tallest woman in pop soon become the biggest? This could be the year Beth Orion is handed the palm.

more vibey. He re-formed his old band, the Lilac Time, blew his recording advance on mending the roof of his brother's barn, and then recorded a forthcoming, still-untitled album of blissy dusk-pop in it. It's worth noting that while

Nick Drake has recently become the hippest name to drop. Stephen Duffy named his band after a Nick Drake lyric in 1987, when everyone was into Glen Medeiros and stone-washed jeans, and has been continuing Drake's lea-

And of course, after a five-year wait, both *Elastica* and *Stereo MC's* are supposed to be releasing their eagerly awaited albums this year. However, as they've both been

put back more times than the completion date of the Jubilee Line extension and are starting to be classed in encyclopaedias along with unicorns, gryphons and the citizens of Atlantis, don't start queuing at HMV just yet.

Ragged royalty

MOST pundits believed that New Order had disappeared for good after dissolving acrimoniously in the wake of their 1993 album, *Republic*. But having reconvened with great success at this summer's Reading Festival, the deadpan quartet headlined two giant festive shows. The first took place at Manchester's Evening News Arena on Tuesday, the second last night at London's Alexandra Palace.

In Manchester, with typically perverse logic, New Order delivered a set which owed far more to their doomy post-punk roots than their more recently acknowledged status as

LIVE GIG

the godfathers of British techno. As at Reading, they dusted down several stark classics from their previous incarnation as Joy Division, notably the spectral rumble of *Atmosphere* and a somewhat ragged rendition of *Love Will Tear Us Apart*.

Even more polished tunes whose studio blueprints are sleek disco projectiles, such as *Touched by the Hand of God* and *Bizarre Love Triangle*, were buried beneath the din of Bernard Sumner's scouring guitar and Peter Hook's truculent bass. Indeed, this was probably their most dissonant and wilfully amateurish show for at least a decade, with Sumner botching lines and missing notes in almost every number.

But there were also moments of sublime pop brilliance. The majestic *Regret* withstood Sumner's careless manhandling with ease, as did an anthemically expanded reworking of *True Faith*. However shamolic their delivery may have been, New Order's tireless energy could not be faulted. And however weary they may be of wheeling out such pop landmarks as *Blue Monday*, they still invested it with passion and grit.

STEPHEN DALTON

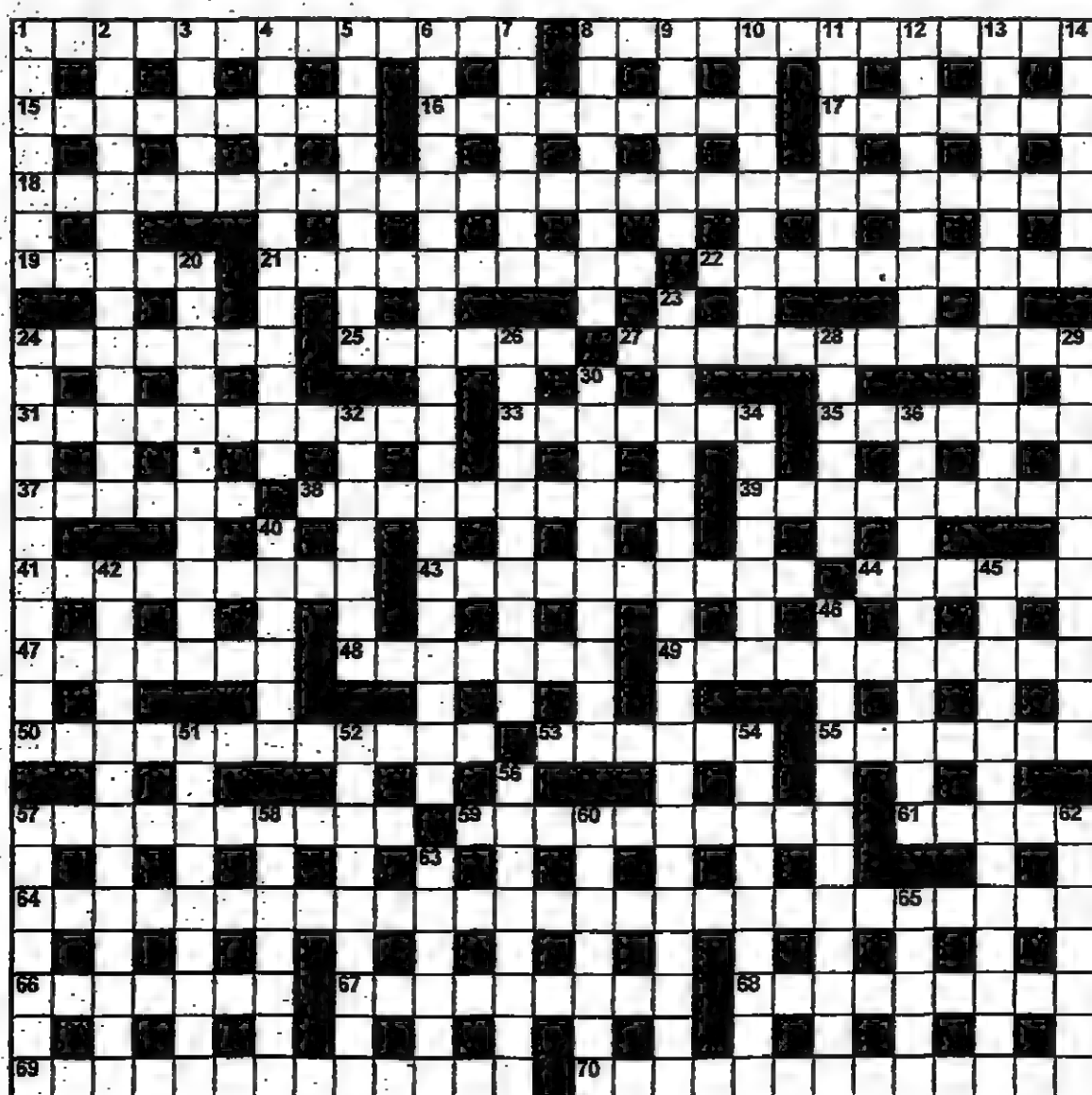
Times Two New Year Jumbo

There is no prize for this crossword. The solution will be published on Monday, January 11

In our New Year Jumbo Crossword competition, a prize of £100 will be awarded for the first correct solution opened on Thursday, January 21, 1999.

Entries to Bank Holiday Jumbo (203), Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The winner and solution will be published in
Weekend on Saturday, January 23



NAME _____

ADDRESS**POSTCODE**

DOWN

- 1 Missing; unavailable (7)
- 2 Portable advertising site (8,5)
- 3 Mountbatten is last Viceroys (5)
- 4 Using hyperbole (12)
- 5 German shepherds (9)
- 6 *Palely loitering Knight poem (Keats) (2.5.4.4.5)*
- 7 Marriage partners (7)
- 8 Precise, particular (8)
- 9 Full of guile (9)
- 10 Make worse (6)
- 11 Bubble of froth (7)
- 12 Examples, occurrences (9)
- 13 Units of distance at sea (8,5)
- 14 (Species) no longer around (7)
- 20 Test of views (7,4)
- 23 Cooper *Hawkeye* novel (3,4,2,3,8)
- 24 Unpowered vessel (7,4)
- 26 Tricked, forced, into joining (ship once) (10)
- 28 Holds and uses (6)
- 29 Notwithstanding (11)
- 30 Ornamental moulding; get *Grandad (anag.) (3-3-4)*
- 32 Fetched (7)
- 34 Country to E of Guyana (7)
- 36 Sea-horse genus; area of brain (11)
- 40 Her future husband (6)
- 42 Nacre (6-2-5)
- 45 Women intellectuals (*hist.*) (13)
- 46 Male hormone (12)
- 51 Letting in (9)
- 52 Proverbially slow movers (9)
- 54 One with nervous disorder (9)
- 56 Quarandies (8)
- 57 (Weather) staying good (3,4)
- 58 Florida city; AYLl character (7)
- 60 Medieval polyphony (7)
- 62 Random draw (7)
- 63 Wooden wheel rim (6)
- 65 Of sound, its recordine (5)

ACROSS

- 1 V Hugo book; a musical (3,10)
- 8 Study of community relationships (6,7)
- 15 Queen's N American subjects (9)
- 16 Returning missile (9)
- 17 Attack (7)
- 18 "Poetry" - (Robert Frost) (2,4,4,2,11)
- 19 A nocturnal lizard (5)
- 21 All those who see newspaper (10)
- 22 Home-made pot. rug, etc (10)
- 24 Support oneself (on) (7)
- 25 Thinly scattered (6)
- 27 The Magi (5,4,3)
- 31 Impossible to transfer (11)
- 33 Prayer, its bell (7)
- 35 Rank; a mill; formation (7)
- 37 Element 1 (3,7)
- 38 Oboe family instrument (6)
- 39 Lay down again (9)
- 41 Deceiving; fashing (bowsprit) (9)
- 43 Position where view taken (10)
- 44 Quirk (6)
- 47 A green/yellow bunting (7)
- 48 Girl's name; *her seat* (*anag*) (7)
- 49 Degree of heat (11)
- 50 Science of disease treatment (12)
- 53 Scattered about (6)
- 55 Workers at keyboard (7)
- 57 Bad-weather-protection entrances (5,5)
- 59 Students of China (10)
- 61 Damage; excavated waste (5)
- 64 To fail to spread risk (2,3,3,4,2,3,6)
- 66 One from Saudi (7)
- 67 A W Spanish city (9)
- 68 Circumcision; a keeping away from (9)
- 69 Piety; scrupulous exactitude (13)
- 70 In naughty, teasing, fashion (13)

The seeds of self-destruction

The seeds of self-destruction

Peter Mandelson's early combative press handling became, sadly, habit-forming, says Christine Buckley

When Stephen Byers, the new Trade and Industry Secretary, walks through the ever-revolving door at the DTI next week his first aim must be to last longer than the 150 days of his predecessor.

He will have no shortage of advice about the best way forward. But he could do worse than start with his own public and press relations — a role which, bizarrely, Peter Mandelson never got to grips with in his time in government.

Robert Harris, the author, described the press coverage of his friend's loan scandal as the worst since Hitler. He was exaggerating, but he had a point. Some of Mandelson's special treatment was secured by sheer irony — that Labour's king of spin was tarnished by the same sleaze that he so effectively campaigned against. But there was a second irony — that the great communicator had a fundamental inability to communicate on his own behalf. In as much as the screaming headlines before Christmas helped to shape Mandelson's decision that he should resign, he was hoist by his own petard.

Mandelson's relations with the media were forged when he had a fight on his hands. As director of communications for Labour during the Kinnock years he had to attempt to present a unified front when the party was losing its direction and the press was hostile.

Part of his approach was to bully lobby correspondents, picking off individuals at press conferences and favouring less questioning reporters. There is scarcely a political reporter from the time that does not have a Mandelson shouting-match story. From then on he

broadened his attacks across national press correspondents until he became a master of news manipulation through Labour's rebuttal unit which, arguably, shaped much of the political news agenda in the run-up to the last general election. Increasingly, he became more of a hate figure. But, by the last election, he should have known better and should have ensured that others fired the public relations bullets.

By then he was an MP for five years and, more importantly, Tony Blair's most trusted and valuable political ally. Two years ago Mandelson was the man most likely to achieve the heights of government. He would have been advised to

have put a distance between himself and spin-doctoring, concerning himself more publicly with policy-making.

But he couldn't resist being seen to wield the truncheon. While publicly bemoaning his own lack of good PR, many think he savoured his unpopularity because it could be interpreted as fear, therefore enhancing his power. It was a silly and elemental mistake. But Mandelson seems to have benefited from little, if any, sensible advice.

So his hubris continued into Government when, as Minister without Portfolio, he became the Government's key spin-doctor. Then came Mandelson's promotion to the Cabinet as Trade and Industry Secretary. Here was a proper job which he could embrace with vigour and with which he could raise the profile of the DTI to heights not seen since the Heseltine reign. And he did. Mandelson's short tenure was a rare blast of energy and enthusiasm through a department that had become both a backwater and a political graveyard.

He just couldn't resist wielding the truncheon



Home truth: while publicly bemoaning his own lack of good PR, many believe that Peter Mandelson savoured his fearsome reputation

Yet his penchant for projecting a poor image rolled on despite pledging to the TUC in his first major speech "no more spin, honest". Mandelson had a particular ease at the DTI — industrial journalists. His dislike of them, part of whose role is to cover trade unions, was well and previously documented. He thought that they were too ready to put over the unions' case and uncontrollable in that they do not necessarily need to be friendly to politicians to get stories.

It had been hoped that Mandelson would adopt a more mature attitude in Government. He didn't. For the recent Competitiveness White Paper, he excluded me from a briefing and told the BBC that he didn't want Steve Evans, its industry correspondent, to cover the story. Both Evans and I covered the publication of the White Paper, which, ironically, was largely well-received and favourably reported.

The BBC told Mandelson that Evans would do all radio coverage as well as television, thus freeing out the Secretary of State from half the airwaves if he did not co-operate. He did, but went on to tell other journalists he wanted his ministerial actions covered by business journalists and that industrial correspondents were "far too redolent of

trade unions and old Labour". Mandelson turned down requests for interviews, did not take questions at the Confederation of British Industry conference and excluded many reporters who covered his areas of responsibility. Representatives of *Vogue* had more success in getting access when they featured his now famous home.

CableTV packages may ice scrutiny

THE Independent Television Commission is pushing ahead with an investigation into whether it is fair for cable companies to "bait" together a package including a telephone line and Thames writes Ray Sholday

The package, offered to subscribers for cost of renting a phone line, has been successful in driving up the number of cable subscribers.

Last year the ITC changed the name of how it charges for the sale of the K. When it dismantled the existing system of charging large packages of basic TV channels before viewers could get access to premium channels.

As a result, cable subscribers have typically been offered the low-cost initial package, including a telephone line, but were then can choose from a variety of smaller premium packages.

Now the ITC is to produce a consultation document which will seek to level the playing field for competitors in the market.

Unlike cable operators, neither satellite nor terrestrial TV operators have the capability of offering a telephone service that competes with BT. One option for the ITC would be to ask that consumers should have to take the telephone and TV package. It could also ask that the option of buying either part of the package at a fair price should be available.

At last year's European Cable Convention in London, Elizabeth Murdoch, managing director of Sky, warned that cable companies became successful they would seek regulation. News International, owner of *The Times* and a 10 per cent stake in BSkyB.

● The author is industrial correspondent of *The Times*



From eloquent forays into the mind of John Lennon to hammy rodents, noodle fights and cringe-inducing stereotypes of Euro-glamour, the television advertisements of 1998 produced a potpourri of style, humour and pure farce

Commercial breaks: winners and losers

BEST OF 1998

1. VW POLO: SELF-DEFENCE

The best of the brilliant VW advertising is set in a tai-chi class, where it slowly becomes apparent that the participants are miming the actions of getting into a car, right down to adjusting the rear-view mirror. My favourite.

2. NIKE: AIRPORT

This is the best of the World Cup advertising by a long mile. The Brazilian team going through its paces in front of a captivated airport terminal audience and a mildly impressed Eric Cantona was so entrancing that it allowed us to forget about the commercialisation of football before the World Cup.

3. VW PASSAT: RULER

"Is that a ruler in your pocket or are you just pleased to see me?" The inevitable punline in the latest of the "obsession" series for the Passat is that the VW engineer produces a ruler, much to Fraulin Barfly's disappointment.

4. AUDI A8: GOLF CLUB

The ad that finally exposed the petty world of golf clubs and the sad people who frequent them. Clubs are apparently banning Audis from their car



Stefano Badfield

5. IKEA: DOWNSIZING

The ad that highlighted just how cheap it was to kit out your entire office at Ikea for the price of one junior. It was withdrawn after complaints. What happened to our renowned sense of humour?

6. ONEZONE: CHRIS 2 JOHN

The best in this excellent series since Ian Wright and Martin Luther King. You really do believe that Evans would inundate Lennon with questions, but would he answer back? OneZone has passed into the language with great style.

IN THE year that Allan Leighton, the chief executive of Asda, committed advertising heresy by declaring "I am a fan of wallpaper advertising", the issue of advertising effectiveness — and how to prove it — hung heavy over the industry.

Wallpaper advertising is creative work that is so bland and inoffensive as to be able to pass unnoticed night after night on your television set, or not interrupt you as you turn the pages of your favourite publication.

It can still work, through the drip-drip repetition of a huge advertising spend forcing its way into the consumer's subconscious. Historically, the leading exponent of this technique is Procter & Gamble, with its ad campaigns for the likes of Ariel, Daz, Bold and Fairy.

Other exponents include big retailers such as Asda and MFI, and the Dixons/Currys group. It is the type of advertising that never wins awards, and

7. BATCHELOR'S SUPERNOODLES: LADS

Advertising for the *Men Behaving Badly* generation. The mates larking about in the kitchen, throwing noodles at each other in martial-arts-movie style commits advertising heresy through its lack of respect for the product — and it's so much the better for it.

8. SCALETRIC: BOYS

Along with Ikea, the most politically incorrect advertising in years. I love the one where the new father cradles someone else's baby because it's a boy.

9. SONY STAMINA: CRASH

A woman leaves her man outside a classic desert diner. As

he struggles to get his camcorder to work, a car roars up, suddenly flips over and crashes into the roof of the diner amid a huge explosion. She returns from the washroom, perplexed. He looks sheepish. It is one of the best-directed spots of the year.

10. McDONALD'S: EUROSTAR SPOOF
Alan Shearer sits on the train taking the mickey out of Eric Cantona's performance in an earlier Eurostar ad. Shearer philosophises about gibberish, and wonders about the McDonald's of the Scottish fan sitting behind him. The best of some excellent McDonald's World Cup promotions.

which no one can remember even if pushed, but — to the horror of the loquacious elements in the industry — it appears to shift product. The argument about what is and what is not effective advertising has never raged more fiercely because clients are no longer prepared to accept Lord Leverhulme's adage that half their advertising budget will be wasted, but nobody knows which half.

The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising's Effectiveness Awards exist to carry the ad industry's message to the client community, but its last two grand prix winners have proved controversial: BT, because critics suggested its success was down to its vast budget; and, this year, the Health Education Authority's anti-drugs advertising, because many thought the proof offered was questionable.

But behind this quest for effectiveness is the issue of trust. Or the lack of it. Rightly or wrongly, the advertising industry has not regained the trust of

much of the marketing community lost during the last recession.

Too many clients believed that too many agencies were making too much money out of them, without being able to prove whether the money was well spent.

In a gloomier 1999, harassed marketing directors, with finance directors breathing down their necks, will be seeking supporting proof as never before. It's one reason that an over-reliance on pre-air consumer research has led to more and more campaigns that are safe but uninspiring.

As a result, the biggest challenge for the UK ad industry in 1999 is to convince its clients to value its strategic and creative intuition, the very skills for which ad agencies are hired in the first place. It will be able to do so only if it can restore lost trust. Talking the need to demonstrate effectiveness more seriously would be a start.

WORST OF 1998

1. LEVITS: KEVIN THE HAMSTER

The great "boy meets girl" campaign came to an end last year, only to be replaced with an appalling set of commercials that ruined years of good work building the brand. Forget whether Kevin really died or not, it might have been an interesting ad — for Diesel!

2. FORD KA: FOOTBALL BOOTS

The shape and design of the funky Ford Ka were compared to a pair of football boots (well, it was pre-World Cup) by a best-tubbed hunk grinning insanely. Everything about it was

misguided, from the terrible casting to the pretentious directing.

3. KERRYGOLD: JACK CHARLTON

To be precise, this was advertising Kerrygold's Dubliner Irish Cheese, so who better to endorse it than that celebrated honorary Irishman, Jack Charlton? Cue every soft-focus Irish cliché in the book.

4. CITROËN XSARA: CLAUDIA SCHIFFER

What do you do if you have Claudia Schiffer under contract to advertise your unremarkable car with its unpronounceable name? Ask her to walk down a sweeping staircase, remove her clothing and

climb into the Xsara, naked. Only she isn't naked and you don't even get the very best computer-generated image of her as if she were naked. Lazy thinking, sloppy commercial.

5. AMARETTO DI SABONINO: PARTY

When will they learn? Lowest-common-denominator pan-European advertising: throw in a few glamorous Eurotrash types, have them bray hysterically at each other's jokes, and mix in product (alcohol) shots over plinky-plonk soundtrack.

6. FERRERO ROCHER: FAMILY PARTY

The ambassador has clearly hit impoverished times. Instead, assorted escapees from

a local asylum celebrate a porticoed house by build a Ferrero tree and smiling heavily. So soft-focus it could be a porn movie.

7. NORWICH UNION: RED BRACES

It's supposed to be about people celebrating affluence and security. How many people gaudy gnomes have ever met that sport red ties?

8. PERSIL: TABLETS

I don't even know where to begin. One again "real" corners are fined endorsing the product, but could have been better. Your. Handym. Yet the product is a sile idea that deserves success.

9. JOHN SMITH'S: ORDINARY BLOKE

The advertiser has dispensed with its celebrity endorser (Jack De) replacing him with a cardboard cut-out of an ordinary bloke, because John Smith's is so good it does need a deity. It does.

10. AMERICA: ONLINE

The women, nauseatingly fawning about the Internet while loads of computer scroll down the mobile clothes happily to put me using the jet.

● Stefano Badfield is the author of *Campaign*

مركز الامم المتحدة

Cable TV packages may face scrutiny

Who needs sex? It's something for nothing that sells

Promotions and Diana were the circulation winners of 1998

Ask journalists who have worked on the national tabloids for years what sells newspapers — Editors such as Neil Wallis at the *Sunday People* or Colin Myler at the *Sunday Mirror* — and they will answer in three words: sex and football. "It's an unbeatable combination," Wallis says.

Winter week by winter week, that may be true, but what moved newspapers fastest off the newsagents' shelves in 1998, according to *Paper Round's* annual survey of the year's bestselling stories and promotions, were promises of money, something for nothing or special supplements or Diana, Princess of Wales — at least until the anniversary of her death in September, when the nation at last decided to let her rest in peace.

Two papers top the 1998 best-seller list. The biggest boost in sales was won by the *Daily Mail* when it launched its 12-week Saturday Diana partwork in January and achieved an increase of 415,000 on the previous week. By March 4, after offering a Diana rose and a free poster Saturday sales had risen to 338,110, the highest in the paper's history.

The biggest percentage increase — 18 per cent — was achieved by *The Mirror* when it serialised in March the story of Trevor Rees-Jones, the bodyguard who was injured in the Paris crash. Sales lifted by 387,000 on the first day and an extra 1.4 million copies were sold during the week.

The *News of the World* and *The Sun* also did well from Diana, as did *The Mail on Sunday* when it serialised Penny Junor's biography of the

Prince of Wales, and achieved the second-highest sale recorded so far, an increase over the previous week of 219,000 copies, lifting it to 2,567,500.

Christmas television listings were winners for *The Sun* (up 353,000) and the *Sunday People* (up 176,000); the winner for *The Sunday Times* was its annual Rich List. *The Sun*, on the day after England lost to Argentina in the World Cup, and the *Sunday Mirror* with an *Only Fools and Horses* video and football: yet again *The Sun* and *News of the World* tied with the *Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror* with Moneybags, achieving sales lifts of more than 250,000. *The Daily Mail* joined in in September with Lucky Wallis. This promotion was genuinely different: every reader could win a prize.

Sales rose by an average of 126,300 copies a day, and by almost 250,000 for *The Mail on Sunday*. Soon after *The Sun* and *News of the World* joined in with Every One's A Winner.

The most successful marketing strategy of the past five years, a cut in cover price, has doubled the sale of *The Times*, and *The Daily Telegraph* has enlisted 271,500 pre-paid subscribers at less than the cover price. Five years on, however, cutting cover prices has diminishing power and works most successfully as a one-off tactic.

The single biggest sales increase of the year was won by *The Mirror* when it cut its price on September 26 from 32p to 10p. It put on 475,000, an increase of nearly 17 per cent. *The Times* boosted sales by 261,000 (33 per cent) on Saturday, January 10, when it introduced its new magazine and reduced the cover price to 20p. Its second and third highest increases were for a *Titanic* supplement (up 91,000 on a Saturday) and a reprint of 1912 *Titanic* reports (up 105,000 on a Monday).

The top 20 is dominated by three newspaper groups. Associated Newspapers, publishers of the *Daily Mail* and *The Mail on Sunday*, News International, owners of *The Sun*,

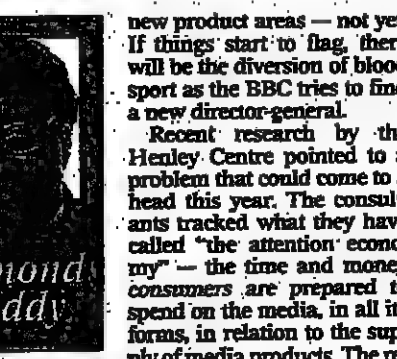
MOST SUCCESSFUL PROMOTIONS OF 1998			
Paper	Copies	Percentage	Promotion
<i>Daily Mail</i>	415,000	34.5	Diana partwork
<i>Sunday Mirror</i>	353,000	29.7	Christmas TV
<i>Sunday People</i>	307,000	25.6	Diana supplement
<i>Sunday Mirror</i>	298,000	24.8	Moneybags
<i>Sunday People</i>	276,000	23.1	Moneybags
<i>Sunday People</i>	261,000	21.7	New magazine/20p
<i>Sunday People</i>	257,000	21.4	Moneybags
<i>Sunday People</i>	250,000	20.8	Moneybags
<i>Sunday People</i>	249,000	20.7	Lucky Wallis
<i>Sunday People</i>	243,000	20.2	Penny Junor on Prince Charles
<i>Sunday People</i>	222,000	18.5	Rich List
<i>Sunday People</i>	221,000	18.4	England lose to Argentina
<i>Sunday People</i>	208,000	17.4	Grand National
<i>Sunday People</i>	194,000	16.2	Every One's A Winner
<i>Sunday People</i>	189,000	15.7	Ryanair cheap flights
<i>Sunday People</i>	186,000	15.5	Ryanair cheap flights
<i>Sunday People</i>	183,000	15.3	Diana supplement
<i>Sunday People</i>	176,000	14.7	Christmas TV
<i>Sunday People</i>	169,000	14.1	World Cup/Only Fools and Horses video

Drama ahead as media supply outstrips demand

With all the fuss over the millennium, you might be mistaken in thinking that 1999 will be a transitional year, a pointer to more exciting times. Not so for the media, with the year likely to produce a higher than average amount of drama and crises. Reality will shed light on some of the more ambitious flights of technological fancy. The biggest reality test will be that applied to digital television — both satellite and terrestrial — launched just a few months ago with parties and fireworks. Right now, it is a phoney war. Equipment is in short supply and both Sky Digital and OnDigital can justly boast of "fantastic" interest and black boxes that are walking off the shelves. But once the "early adopters" and techno-freaks have had their appetite for 100 channels of TV satisfied, we will start to learn just how deep is the desire for extra choice, much of it in the form of marginal channels. If the public turns out to be stubborn, unimpressed or wary, watch for the first managerial sacrifices before the summer holidays end.

This will also be the year in which we find out if Lord Holford can do more than stabilise *The Express* — holding the circulation decline to manageable levels. Or can the patient rise from its sickbed?

As the life-and-death struggle continues, media watchers — in London, at least — will be diverted by the launch of two "free" daily newspapers. News International, owner of *The Times*, will aim a new title at what it hopes is the soft underbelly of the *Evening Standard's* near monopoly of classified advertising in the capital. Associated Newspapers, which owns the *Evening Standard*, will try to protect its other flank by launching a free morning edition. Delicious shades of an old-fashioned press war provides proof that the Internet is not entirely dominating



Raymond Snoddy

new product areas — not yet. If things start to flag, there will be the diversion of blood sport as the BBC tries to find a new director-general.

Recent research by the Henley Centre pointed to a problem that could come to a head this year. The consultants tracked what they have called "the attention economy" — the time and money consumers are prepared to spend on the media, in all its forms, in relation to the supply of media products. The researchers discovered "a Niagara of supply" measured against only "a pint-glass of demand".

The trend is well-known but figures for the past decade are startling nonetheless. Between 1989 and 1997, there was a 1,525 per cent rise in the number of television stations and a 213 per cent growth in radio stations. The number of book titles was up by 77 per cent and new albums up 114 per cent; new magazine titles were up only 19 per cent.

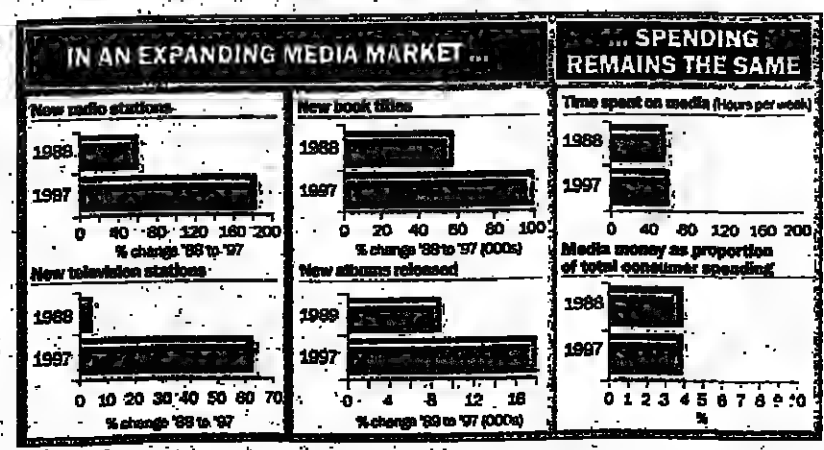
Remarkably, the Henley Centre found that over the past decade the amount of time an individual spent interacting with

the media hardly budged at all from 60 hours a week — or, in terms of money, from 4 per cent of consumer spending.

Despite all the new channels and media offerings, the forecast for 1999 is for an increase in time spent with the media of only six minutes a person a week and £8 extra spending a year. This amounts to little more than two visits to the cinema or eight Sunday newspapers. Such benchmark figures must induce an instant reality factor, not to mention sobriety.

It gets worse for some sections of the media in this battle for consumers' time and money. The Henley Centre estimates that in 1999 the consumer will devote six minutes less a week to reading compared with last year and 24 minutes less to viewing. But it predicts that a consumer will spend 18 minutes more listening, and 18 more with interactive media. The money breakdown is £7 a year more spent on viewing; £2 more on interacting; £1 less on listening; no change for reading.

The news is worst of all for newspapers. It is the only medium in which the researchers predict loss of both consumer time and money this year. As the consultants warn us: it's a fight for survival. There is no danger that 1999 will be a boring year for the media.



Special supplements on Diana, Princess of Wales, and promises of money or prizes were the two subjects which moved newspapers fastest off the newsagents' shelves last year

of the World, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, and the *Mirror* Group, with *The Mirror*, *Sunday Mirror* and the *Sunday People*. They are the big hitters, using big marketing budgets for promotion deals and television advertising to boost sales.

Success for other newspapers comes in smaller doses. *The Express* had its best boost from a gardening supplement that put on 120,000 (8 per cent). The group's other successes were based on sporting promotions: *The Express* added 72,000 in August for football fixtures, *The Express on Sun-*

day gained 126,000 in January in promoting sport, and World Cup magazines added 64,000 for *The Express on Sunday* and 38,000 for the *Daily Star* (7 per cent). A Panini World Cup stickers promotion gave *The Observer* its best Sunday.

The Budget delivered the highest increases of the year for *The Guardian* (up 60,000) and *The Daily Telegraph* (up 21,000). *The Sunday Telegraph*, paradoxically, had its best sale on January 4 when it raised its cover price. *The Independent* prefers not to disclose its successes, but it is a safe guess that it has its best days

in August when it lists university vacancies.

The top 20 demonstrates the crucial role of marketers in maintaining and boosting newspaper sales. The *Sunday Times* hit its highest sale for years on October 4 when it offered a BSkyB digital magazine, a wine guide and Woodrow Wyatt's diaries. *The Times* added 397,000 in sales in one week of September when it promoted an easyjet offer and Richard Branson's autobiography. Divide that by six and average sales for the week are up by 66,000. Divide it by 24 and average monthly

sales are up by 16,000. With the intense competition among British newspapers, such increases really matter.

They matter still more when set in the context of declining newspaper sales. The good news is that the British still buy more than 13 million national newspapers a day and more than 14 million on Sundays. The bad news is that year-on-year sales in November were down by 150,000 on weekdays — and by 770,000 on Sundays (which is really bad news). Without all those promotions, the news would be a lot worse.

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CHANGING TIMES

[illegible]

Shares close off their lows

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

BANKS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Barclays Bank	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	HSBC Bank	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	London City	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Midland Bank	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	NatWest Bank	99.50	-1.0	10.2

BREWERS, PUBS & REST

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

BUILDING MATERIALS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

CHEMICALS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

CONSTRUCTION

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

DISTRIBUTORS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

HOUSEHOLD GDS & TEXT

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

INSURANCE

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

LONGS (over 15 years)

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

MEDIA

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

PHARMACEUTICALS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

SUPPORT SERVICES

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

TRANSPORT

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

WATER

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

RETAILERS, FOOD

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

RETAILERS, GENERAL

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

UNDATED

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

INDEX-RELATED

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

PRINTING & PAPER

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

PROPERTY

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

LEISURE & HOTELS

High	Low	Company	Price	% Chg	P/E
120.00	119.00	Adnams Ltd	119.50	-0.8	12.5
115.00	114.00	Beck's Ltd	114.50	-0.9	11.2
110.00	109.00	Carlsberg Ltd	109.50	-0.9	10.8
105.00	104.00	Heineken Ltd	104.50	-0.9	10.5
100.00	99.00	Timothy's Ltd	99.50	-1.0	10.2

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Western business under threat from Islamic backlash

BY CARL MORTISHED
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

AN Islamic backlash against the recent US and British attacks on Iraq will pose a threat to Western businesses in 1999, raising the prospect of further terrorist attacks in Egypt and growing unrest in Turkey.

A report by Merchant International Group (MIG), a consultancy which specialises in political, economic and security

risks, predicts that the bombing of Iraq will escalate the growth of Islamic terrorism. MIG sees the recent deaths in the Yemen as evidence of the beginnings of a campaign aimed at Westerners doing business or travelling in the region.

MIG claimed yesterday that a representative of Osama bin Laden, the Saudi Arabian accused of funding terrorist attacks from Afghanistan, was recently sent to Syria to consult with members of Hamas. According to MIG, the purpose

of the meeting was to plan attacks on British and American citizens.

The organisation also predicts further terrorist activity from the Algerian GIA and the Egyptian group Al-Gama'at-Islamiyya. In Egypt, efforts by the Government to reduce the Islamic content of the educational system and to reduce the influence of religious scholars will also cause friction.

More alarming is MIG's prediction of an increase in religious tension in Tur-

key. Stuart Poole-Robb, chief executive of MIG, explained that the Turkish Government had been taking measures to curb the spread of Islamic culture and teaching. He said: "Things are going to get out of hand. I don't think it will be as aggressive as Egypt but I do think there will be protests. There is a fear that there could be a Taliban-inspired Islamic extremist backlash."

Turkey's recent overtures to Israel are expected to fuel the protests and increase

tension with Syria. The latter will find itself sandwiched between Turkey and Israel, two pro-Western states, and Syria has been supporting Kurdish separatists in Turkey.

MIG monitors the activities of some 42 terrorist groups as well as 5,000 criminal organisations and advises companies on how to avoid such risks.

In contrast, MIG now believes Iran is becoming a safer place to do business and predicts that Italy, France and the UK

will upgrade their diplomatic relations with the country. Mr Poole-Robb said: "In 1999 we will see significant changes. With Rafsanjani and Khatami working in tandem, they are doing all they can to attract foreign direct investment."

Elsewhere, MIG points to the potential of armed conflict between Morocco and Algeria over disputed southern territory, with the former country purchasing weaponry from both Russia and South Africa.

Boeing lifts deliveries to beat projections

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN SEATTLE

A TROUBLED year for Boeing ended on an upbeat note when the company announced the delivery of a record 550 aircraft for the year, meeting its 1998 goal and exceeding a recent projection that it would deliver 546 aircraft.

Boeing suffered a series of setbacks in 1998, forcing it to cut production and jobs in response to Asian economic problems and competition from Airbus Industrie, its only significant competitor.

But Alan Mulally, newly named president of the commercial airplane division, Boeing's largest group, said the company's success in meeting the production goal and its expectations of beating it in 1999 by delivering about 620 jetliners showed the "production system is starting to get healthy again."

Mr Mulally took the reins of the commercial airplane division from Ron Woodard in September as part of a sweeping reorganisation. Under Mr Woodard the division tried to nearly triple production over three years, but its plants, staffed with many newly hired workers, were overwhelmed by parts shortages, forcing Boeing to halt work on two assembly lines.

Since September Boeing has given warning of lower earnings in the coming year and announced plans to eliminate up to 38,000 jobs by the end of 1999 and an additional 10,000 jobs in 2000. Its workforce peaked at 238,000 in June 1998. Mr Mulally said the Asian economic crisis should have less of an impact on the group this year as fewer deliveries are scheduled to Asian airlines.

Small IFAs face fines after missing pensions deadline

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY

MORE than 100 small independent financial advisers (IFAs) have missed the important deadline to organise redress for clients in the first stage of the pensions mis-selling review, the Personal Investment Authority said last night.

Firms were obliged to submit details of compensation offered to people who were mis-sold personal pension plans in the 1980s and who are now retired or close to retirement by December 31.

The IFAs had to send in documents showing how they had calculated compensation and how many cases they had dealt with.

The PIA said yesterday that it had received a considerable number of forms in the past few days as IFAs rushed to send in their returns.

Many small firms brought in staff over the Christmas and New Year period in an attempt to meet the deadline, and all of the 41 biggest pension providers — among them many household names — have met the deadline already.

The PIA issued a stern warning earlier this week that it would not hesitate to issue fines to firms that missed the deadline, which was set in spring 1997.

A spokeswoman said: "We are receiving the final pieces of information and seeking figures and details of caseloads. By the end of next week we will have a clear picture of who has missed the deadline, and will then begin to examine whether or not they have a valid excuse."

Last month Patricia Hewitt, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, took a tough line against pension providers and



Patricia Hewitt has taken a tough line against pension providers and IFAs, and accused some of dragging their feet.

IFAs, some of which she accused of dragging their feet.

Last year more than 600 small IFA firms missed the initial deadline because of problems filling in forms or compiling data.

The PIA said that it had not ruled out "naming and shaming" and fining the principals of independent financial advisers

that consistently missed deadlines.

Some see the introduction of the proposed stakeholder pension — announced last month — as an indication that the Government has lost patience with high-charging insurance companies.

According to calculations by Lane Clark & Peacock, the con-

sulting actuary, however, the average value of the stakeholder pension could be just £50 a week.

David Lane, one of the firm's partners, said that the sum could be even less if the investment funds performed badly, or if investors could not afford to save more than £100 a month. An individual now

aged 30 paying £100 a month for the next 30 years could end up with the £50 a week pension, he said.

"Stakeholder pensions do not provide any guarantees. Individuals will be subject to the vagaries of the stock market, the effects of inflation and the prevailing price of annuities at retirement."

Microsoft launches attack on witness

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

MICROSOFT has launched a pre-emptive strike against the first government witness to be called when the historic anti-trust trial resumes after the Christmas recess.

William Harris, the chief executive of Inuit, the leading personal finance software maker, is expected to give details of the arm-twisting he suffered at Microsoft's hands. His written testimony was prepared for release this week.

In a stinging personal attack on Mr Harris, Microsoft said: "Mr Harris's testimony is rife with rank speculation, hypothetical situations and attempts at complex legal, technical and economic analysis by a witness who is neither an attorney, a software developer, nor an economist."

The animosity between Microsoft and Mr Harris harks back to the software group's repeated attempts to take over Inuit. Mr Harris was able to fight off the attempts with the help of the Justice Department, which is now prosecuting the Microsoft case.

The takeover attempts were vetoed by the government regulators because Microsoft already offers a personal finance package called Money. The Inuit product, Quicken, is the market leader.

Mr Harris will follow the example of executives from AOL, Sun Microsystems, Netscape and Intel who have all testified against Microsoft. Another witness, Scott Cook, the

former Inuit chairman, even accused Bill Gates, the Microsoft chairman, of attempted bribery.

In 1996 Mr Gates sent an e-mail to Mr Cook, offering to do a favour "that would cost us something like \$1 [million] to do in return for switching browsers in the next few months."

Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser is directly competing with Netscape's Navigator.

The trial will resume on Monday, ending the recess that started on December 16. The trial has already lasted longer than lawyers had anticipated. The judge originally wanted to finish hearing testimonies before Christmas.



Gates pre-emptive strike

THE SUNDAY TIMES

RAPE OR ROMANCE?

She was his schoolteacher, he was only 12. Now they've got two children, and she's got seven years.

The Sunday Times Magazine this weekend.

PLUS

Art trail: Charles Saatchi gives us a private view of his new neurotic realism movement: the hottest new art in Britain today.

Glamour: bimboes are no longer required in the revamped Miss World, but the girls are still using for a sash.

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Russian GDP shrinks by 5.5%

BY ALASTAIR MURRAY
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE Russian Government yesterday admitted that the country's economy had shrunk at its fastest rate since the end of the Soviet era.

Revealing the full extent of the damage wreaked by the economic crisis which has engulfed the country, the Economics Ministry revealed statistics showing that Russian GDP contracted by 5.5 per cent in 1998.

Annual inflation has also soared to nearly 85 per cent, while trade, heavily dependent on oil exports, declined by 13.6 per cent. The Russian currency, the rouble, has lost nearly 70 per cent of its value since it became the target of speculators in late summer.

The depressing data was released as one of the country's largest banks moved one step closer to becoming the first substantial financial services company to go into liquidation since the crisis began.

Tokobank, once one of Russia's 20 largest finance houses, was ruled bankrupt by a Moscow court with \$363 million (£213 million) of debt against assets of just \$165 million.

Anagen property move another biotech blow

BY SAEED SHAH

THE crisis in the UK biotechnology sector deepened yesterday when Anagen gave up on micro-organisms research and launched an agreed bid for a property company, to be paid for in shares.

Gander Holdings, which has residential property in London's Kensington and Chelsea, agreed to the deal to take advantage of Anagen's tax losses, which stand at more than £27 million. Future profits can be offset against these tax losses to avoid paying tax.

Anagen has been a shell company since its automated immuno-assay technology

proved unsuccessful and it was delisted from the stock market in April 1997.

The offer is on the basis of one Anagen share for every Gander share, and \$12 million new Anagen shares will be issued to Gander shareholders.

The enlarged group will be called Gander Properties and will include all the Gander board. The current members of the Anagen board, except William Cairns, chairman, and Kim Martin, will resign without compensation.

Gander, whose shares closed on Wednesday at 64p, has a market capitalisation of

about £35 million — a little more than half its net asset value of £66 million.

In August Gander bought Barrasford, a similar property company, for £24.4 million.

Gander said in its interim statement in October that it expects to make losses in the years ending January 1, 1999 and 2000.

In a joint statement, Gander and Anagen said that the prospects for Gander, as enlarged by the Barrasford acquisition, are encouraging and strong demand continues for the high-quality residential lettings in which it specialises.



Gander's Oliver Vaughan, chief executive, left, and Tom Vaughan, chairman, seek tax advantages

Customers can keep number when changing provider

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

MOBILE phone users can expect to be bombarded with advertising and special offers over the coming weeks as their service providers seek to retain their loyalty and to recruit subscribers from rival companies after the advent today of mobile number portability.

Number portability will allow customers to switch from one network operator to another and take their existing mobile phone number with them.

Orange said that it would be launching an advertising campaign to support mobile number portability. Bob Fuller, the group's chief operating officer, said:

"For the first time consumers will be offered real choice and will be able to vote with their feet if they are dissatisfied, unconvinced by the problems of having to change their number."

"We will be vigorously pursuing those customers who may be dissatisfied with their present network, making it both easy and simple to join Orange."

For customers who switch their existing number to One 2 One between today and the end of March, the company is offering up to £100 back on the second bill following transfer.

Both Vodafone and Cellnet are relying on their existing offers for the moment. David Edmonds, the Director-General

of Telecommunications, said that number portability "will encourage much more intense competition in the mobile market as the four companies fight to win and retain customers". The Ofcom chief added: "In the end the winner will be the customer."

The operators will be allowed to charge customers to cover the costs of transferring the numbers but this is not expected to be more than a one-off charge of £25.

A spokesman for Vodafone said that Ofcom and the service providers had been working for the past 12 months to ensure that the technology is ready for the increased volume of people switching servers that the change will bring.

مركز من لاجل

Boots to take on 100 staff

Boots The Chemist is taking on 100 staff to train as specialised consultants in preparation for the launch next month of three ranges of French skincare products. The advisers will offer skincare consultations in a specially designed area of 90 stores, next to the pharmacy.

The products include a range from Laboratoires Dermatologiques L'Oréal, a French business bought in 1996 by Boots Healthcare International, the non-prescription medicine division of the Boots group. All the brands aim to bridge the gap between medicinal and cosmetic products.

Korean bank sale

A US investment consortium took control of the ailing Korea First Bank (KFB) yesterday in the first significant foreign acquisition of a South Korean financial institution. The consortium, led by Newbridge Capital, which was selected ahead of HSBC Holdings, agreed to buy a 51 per cent stake in KFB for an undetermined price. Officials said the deal would help South Korea to introduce advanced banking skills into the industry, which has been marred by corruption and uncontrolled lending.

Ulster gold

Northern Ireland is set for a gold rush after Omagh Minerals won a licence to mine the precious metal in the province. The mine, near Omagh, will employ about 60 people when it opens later this year. The company expects to mine about 50,000 tonnes of ore a year.

AT&T wins approval for \$32bn TCI deal

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

The \$32 billion (£19 billion) takeover of TCI, the second-biggest US television cable operator, by AT&T, the leading phone company, has received the go-ahead from the Justice Department.

To win approval, the two companies agreed to divest TCI's 23 per cent stake in Sprint PCS, which offers mobile-phone services in direct competition to AT&T.

TCI will not have to sell its stake immediately but has to sign control over to a trustee who then has five years to sell the stake valued at more than \$2 billion.

The Justice Department approval clears the way for the creation of a new type of telecoms group which combines orthodox phone lines and sophisticated fibre-optic lines with a view to building a network that can deliver phone, television and computer services into homes.

Michael Armstrong, the AT&T chief executive, negotiated the TCI deal soon after his



Michael Armstrong, left, agreed the takeover with the TCI chairman, John Malone, in June

appointment last year. Wall Street views his vision of one integrated network as an ambitious bet that could either bankrupt AT&T or give it the monolithic position it enjoyed in the telephone sector before being broken up by the regulators in 1984.

AT&T's competitors had lobbied the Justice Department not to allow the resurrection of

an all-powerful AT&T. But the regulators took the view that competition was strong in the telecoms sector and that companies such as WorldCom MCI are poised to follow Mr Armstrong's lead.

AT&T itself repeatedly pointed to the immense investments necessary to build the envisioned network. Analysts estimate that AT&T will have to

spend about \$5 billion on hardware alone.

After fleeing its muscles early in 1998 when merger mania was in full flow, the Justice Department has now returned to its more docile ways. Earlier this week it approved the BP-Amoco deal. The regulator's biggest casualty last year was the scuppered takeover of Northrup Grumman by Lockheed Martin.

ICI sale to Enron completed

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

ENRON, the US power company, boosted its interests in the UK yesterday with the completion of a £300 million deal to buy ICI's Teesside utility interests.

The purchase, first announced in November, gives Enron an operation that supplies large industrial customers with gas, electricity and support services. The interests include a power station, water treatment plant, rail tracks and more than 1,760 acres of land. More than 550 staff will be transferred to Enron.

ICI's decision to sell the business — on which it estimates it will make a £120 million post-tax gain — is part of its overhaul of operations to shift away from industrial chemicals and industrial divisions to focus on speciality products, coatings and materials.

The company said it will use the sale proceeds to reduce debt, which stands at £4.4 billion.

Executives at E*Trade get \$100m present

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

EXECUTIVES at E*Trade, the second-biggest US online brokerage, have given themselves a Christmas present worth \$100 million (£60 million) after repricing their share options.

According to Securities & Exchange Commission documents, the company rewrote option schemes when Internet shares were at a low in October. Since then, the sector has staged a stunning return to new heights.

E*Trade's share price rose from a low of \$17, when the options were repriced, to \$60, swept along by Wall Street's keen interest in any company associated with the Internet.

Of E*Trade's 700 employees about two thirds are said to have share options. How many benefited from the repricing is not known. Top executives, including Christos Constantinides, the president, received 550,000 options each last year.

The company reported to the SEC that a total of 3.5 million shares were affected by the repricing move. The paper gains generated in the process

are estimated at more than \$100 million.

In most option schemes the recipients have to wait for several years to benefit from the gains. But the E*Trade scheme, which is not unusual in the get-rich-quick Internet sector, vests at a rate of 25 per cent a year.

While such a system would be viewed as an assault on shareholder value in most other companies, the E*Trade shareholders are unlikely to complain very loudly.

They too have benefited from the near quadrupling of the share price and probably do not want to rock the cash-laden boat, analysts said.

In an attempt to show a degree of modesty, the company made it known that the repriced options would have their vesting periods reset so that nobody could cash out immediately.

To prevent a repricing at a temporary share price low, most traditional company remuneration committees have policies on when and how quickly option schemes can be adjusted.

Bank unions may merge

Plans for the first industry-wide trade union for banking and building society workers will be put to the vote this month. Three of the main banking unions — the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union, UNIFI and the NatWest Staff Association — will ask their 200,000 members to approve the deal, which has been forged after two years of discussions. If it is endorsed, the super-union will start in May.

To become the world's No1 we just merged hundreds of companies together.

It's obvious really. If you want to build your business you have to work together. It's why Lotus is the business (world's No1) e-mail company. In fact 38.4% of the world's file-share and client/server e-mail customers, including 42 of Fortune's top 50 companies, use Lotus' e-mail because of its top-notch flexibility. Not surprising considering the unrivalled (integration). It can easily adapt into your present system, so you can protect your previous investment. And once fitted you can enjoy something rather unusual: An e-mail system that actually delivers. Every time. All thanks to lots of fascinating technical gizmos that give impeccable (reliability). And then finally it's all wrapped in Lotus (security) to give you the Fort Knox of e-mail systems. Really complicated defence codes are built into the core of the system to prevent nosey people messing around in your private business. We'd love to tell you all about them but, obviously, they're a secret. Anyway, if you want your company to grow, visit our website to discover how Lotus can help you to merge.

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Answers from page 26

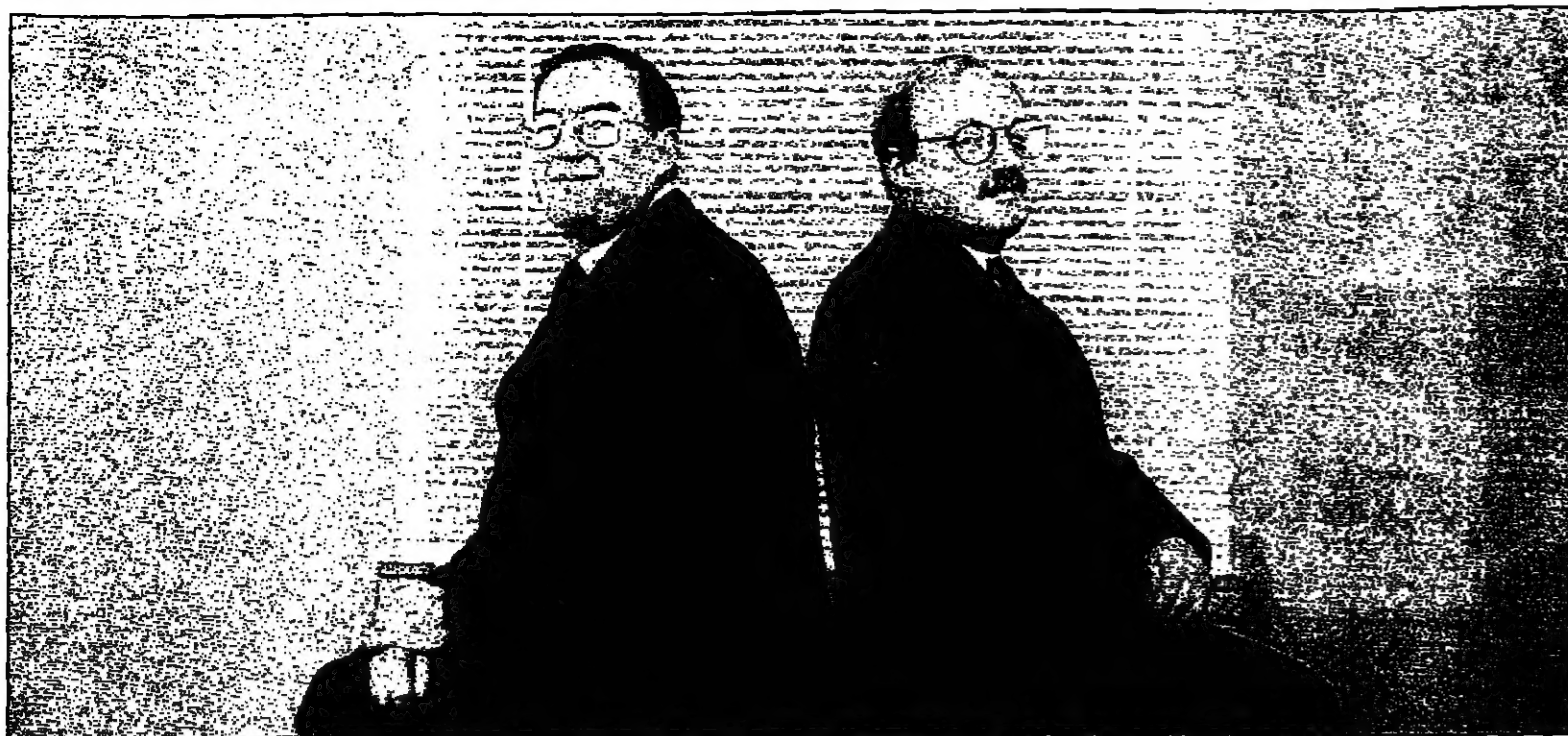
TYMPF
(b) A coin in base silver circulating in Poland and Prussia in the 17th century. It was known as "goldentympe", and was worth 30 groschen despite being stamped only 18. The name became synonymous with "debased coin".

NERF BAR
(c) A special bumper attached to front, back and sides of a modified stock car in order to prevent the wheels of the one car touching the wheels of another car while racing.

PERFECTA
(a) A betting ploy, whereby the gambler must pick the two runners that come first and second in a race, and get them in the right order, to win.

HAGGADAH
(c) A Jewish sacred book containing the Exodus narrative. It is ritually recited at Passover. It is the only Hebrew book with a long and consistent tradition of illustration.

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE
1... Rb1 2 Qb8 2 Qb2 Rb2... while 2 Qb6 is also met by 2... h5; 2 h5; 3 Qc3... Kh7 and Black will emerge the exchange ahead.



Winning post: Paul Chisholm, president, left, and Larry Ingenieri, finance director of Colt Telecom, shares of which soared 482 per cent from 154p to 896p

Colt canters home to cheer investors in City stakes

Bob Hoskins summed it up in the British Telecom advertising campaign when he uttered the phrase "it's good to talk". Good and certainly profitable if you happen to be one of those City investors who invested heavily in the telecoms sector during 1998.

No fewer than four telecom companies feature in the top 20 best performers, with BT finishing a creditable 30th after a leap of almost 90 per cent in its share price from 478p to 905p.

But the star was Colt Telecom, which was first past the post with a huge lead on its nearest rival. This followed a leap in its share price from 154p to 896p, a staggering 482 per cent — a move that also catapulted the company into the league of the biggest 100 companies in Britain.

Also in the running was Orange, the mobile phone operator, which floated a couple of years ago by British Aerospace and Hutchison Wharfedale, whose shares grew from 26p to 698p, or 164 per cent. It was followed by Telewest Communications, a company that also achieved fame as a constituent of the FTSE 100 index before

Michael Clark reports on the winners and losers of this year's stock market steeplechase

earning a penny profit. It started 1998 at 70p and ended on 173p, a leap of 147 per cent.

In 13th place came Vodafone, Britain's biggest mobile phone operator, with a surge of 537p to 976p, or 122 per cent.

Not bad performances for investors and certainly more rewarding than if they had chosen to leave their hard-earned savings under the bed.

But it was not all plain sailing and, at one stage, there were doubts that the equity market would achieve any gains on the year at all.

After an encouraging start to 1998, buoyed by takeover fever and gains in the banking sector, investors were soon forced to ponder the collapse in Far Eastern economies. An unexpected rise in domestic interest rates in June, sent the pound soaring, which made life increasingly difficult for manufacturers and started the rollercoaster ride that investors were forced to endure for much of the rest of the year.

Having hit an all-time high

of 6,183.7 on July 20, the FTSE 100 had plunged to 4,599.2, its lowest level of the year, by October 8. It closed on Wednesday, at 5,882.6, a rise on the year of 747.1, or 14.5 per cent.

The outlook for 1999 remains uncertain. There is no shortage of money finding its way into the market, interest rates are falling and the high levels of corporate activity show no signs of abating. Against that must be set the slowdown in the UK economy, the slump in the Far East and continuing market volatility.

Another successful sector in 1998 was information technology. No less than six IT companies featured in the top 20 best performers of fully listed shares. The sector would have been even more impressive had it not been for a wobble during the final quarter as investors began to worry about the impact of recession on earnings growth.

Many IT companies are

closely linked to the investment banking sector, which has undergone heavy rationalisation in recent months. This makes the likelihood of increased expenditure on new computer systems and the updating of old ones less likely.

The best performance came from RM with a leap of 304p to 463p, or 190 per cent. Similar performances were seen in Sherwood International, up from 530p to £13.55 (155 per cent), London Bridge Software, 508p to £12.87 (153 per cent), Logica, 231p to £22.4p (125 per cent), Kewill Systems, 570p to £12.75 (123 per cent) and FI Group, up from 153p to 328p (111 per cent).

But not all companies struck the right chord with investors during 1998. The expected revival for retailers failed to materialise. Instead, they had to face up to tougher trading conditions with profit warnings sprinkled liberally throughout the year. One of the worst performers was House of Fraser, down from 200p to 52p, or 74

per cent. At the other end of the high street, JJB Sports plunged 64 per cent from 64p to 23p as the craze for replica football shirts came apart at the seams amid falling prices and increased competition.

The big ticket retailers, such as the carpet and furniture stores, were also hit. They saw their shares collapse in the wake of a plethora of profit warnings. A case in point was Harveys Furnishings, which saw its price fall 170p to 101p (63 per cent) on the back of several profit warnings. Other retailers to feel the pinch included MFI Furniture, 120p to 34p (71 per cent), and the supermarket chain Aldi, down 34p (66 per cent) to 171p.

Booker found itself left on the shelf after a difficult year that saw it felled not once, but twice. First, it was in bid talks with Somerfield. But the talks faltered and it later became clear that Somerfield had taken a look at the company and did not like what it found.

A profits warning was followed by talks with Budgens, another supermarket chain. But once again the talks came to nothing and were followed by another profits warning.

This was all very bad news for Stuart Rose, the man brought in to revive Booker's fortunes. He bought a large chunk of shares before being forced to issue the profit warnings. They finished the year 255p (80 per cent) lower at 62p. The fall from grace of Albert Fisher, another food distributor, has been as swift as it has been dramatic. The shares started the year at 364p and closed on Wednesday at 54p, a fall of 86 per cent. Boardroom upheavals combined with a series of profit warnings to drive the shares lower.

Incompatibles was another significant casualty in 1998 after the quality of its blood vessel supports, or stents, to be supplied to Johnson & Johnson was called into question. The shares started the year at 492p and finished it at 86p, a loss of 82 per cent.

The inescapable rise of Regent Inns since its flotation in 1993 came to a shuddering halt in June as it served up a profits warning laced with accounting errors. Its shares crashed 140p that day to 176p and any chance of a recovery has been scuppered by the dire summer weather and the gloomy outlook for consumer spending. Its shares ended the year 69 per cent lower at 101p.

Powerscreen provided a classic example of how ruthless the City can be at the merest hint of scandal. It provided one of the most dramatic falls seen in the stock market last year in the wake of the discovery of accounting irregularities. Having started the year at 607p, it ended at 116p, a loss of 493p, or 81 per cent.

Share	Start	End	Change
Australia S.	2.19	2.42	10.96
Austria Rich.	20.60	18.94	-8.06
Belgium Fr.	80.52	55.56	-30.92
Canada S.	2.959	2.498	-15.24
Cyprus Cyp. E.	0.8711	0.7996	-8.21
Denmark Dk.	11.17	10.26	-8.14
Egypt	9.01	8.26	-8.21
France Fr.	9.81	9.03	-8.06
Germany Dm.	2.948	2.709	-8.11
Greece Gr.	4.91	4.03	-17.92
Hong Kong S.	12.67	12.47	-1.58
India S.	1.054	1.054	0.00
Indonesia	1.054	1.054	0.00
Italy Lit.	1.1737	1.0947	-6.72
Japan Yen	293.1	269.4	-7.94
Malaysia	2.25	2.14	-4.89
Malta	0.881	0.822	-6.71
Netherlands Gld.	3.229	3.034	-6.04
New Zealand	2.91	2.78	-4.47
Norway Kr.	13.23	12.29	-7.03
Portugal Esc.	29.1	27.85	-4.30
Sweden Kr.	10.39	9.43	-9.24
Spain Ptas.	248.16	229.37	-7.57
Switzerland Fr.	2.444	2.228	-9.25
Taiwan N.T.	89.995	80.995	-10.00
USA \$	1.765	1.622	-8.11

Notes for small denomination denominated only are supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to travel's choices. Rates are at close of trading yesterday.

Fifty years of favourites

Are You Sitting Comfortably?
BBC1, 4.05pm

That lovely little trail for BBC children's programmes (it even had its own title — *Future Generations*) may have given you — never mind the smaller members of your family — a taste for this annual of clips from *Muffin the Mule* or through the decades to *Teletubbies* 50 years of programming for children so you're bound to find something you remember, whatever your age. *Bagpuss?* *Fogies* *Wood?* How about *Mulligan and Poppo*? Viewers have been voting for their favourites by phone, letter and e-mail and today we'll hear which programme is their overall poll-winner. Meanwhile, celebrities have their say... for Gary Lineker you can't beat *Blue Peter*. *The Clangers* are at the centre of Patrick Moore's universe and Angus Rippin is nostalgic for *The Magic Roundabout*.

UK Confidential — A Leviathan Special
BBC2, 6.40pm

For the first time television has been given advance sight of the secret documents closed until January 1 of each year under the 30 year rule. So, though we haven't yet got what the Americans pride themselves on — a Freedom of Information Act — we can now see the true picture of events in 1968 as kept under wraps by the Public Record Office. Says presenter Mark Urban: "I think viewers will be surprised by how directly our 1968 films relate to 1998 headlines." Included are Brian Walden's report on Prime Minister Harold Wilson's "inside stories" and a look at the declassification process within the Foreign Office. Other contributors are James Callaghan, Roy Jenkins, Barbara Castle, Denis Healey and other key ministers from 1968. We're told that what is released today amounts to "a mile and a half" of primed material — *Leviathan* has been working over several months to mine the nuggets.

My Favourite Frasier
Channel 4, 9.00pm

Kelsey Grammer has played the Seattle radio shrink Dr Frasier Crane for 14 years (introducing the character on *Cheers*) and this evening sees a celebration of the kind only television can do for its



Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer star in a new comedy series (BBC2, 10.15pm)

own. We start with high profile stars from both sides of the Atlantic picking their favourite episodes, plus the choices of writers, producers, cast members, even the odd psychiatrist. Kelsey's own favourite (9.30pm) is the wonderful *Our Father Who Art Ain't in Heaven* — then there's a documentary on the making of the show (10pm) and the chance for viewers to vote for their favourite episode (10.40pm). After all this sublimating the evening ends in *Cheers* (11.00pm) with more classic one-liners from the good doctor, then a regular at that much-missed pub.

Bang, Bang, It's Reeves and Mortimer
BBC2, 10.15pm

Thank goodness. Not that one has anything against *Stargate* but it did tend to be our hyperactive heroes to a desk and a (sort of) quiz format. Now, with one bound, they are free again to do what they do best. After a three-year absence from their mould-breaking sketch show *Vic and Bob* return with some old faces... talk singers Mulligan and O'Fair, Tim Fun and the Stuts are just some of them. But there's plenty sharp new... Mr Hex the Road Safety Woodpecker will be a permanent fixture and a docusoup called *The Club* with Vic as owner, bouncer and compère. Kinky John is not to be missed. The supporting cast includes Charlie Higson and... Mortimer Banks. Elizabeth Cowley

RADIO CHOICE

Small Worlds
BBC World Service, 3.15pm

Cleo Paskalis's six-part documentary is about what the world's smaller nations are doing to avoid the man-made environmental disasters that threaten the survival of their bigger brothers. I can't speak about the rest of the series but I can tell you that episode one is popular sociology with a recognisably human face. The going on, however, sometimes get tough. The Maldives protect their vital tuna supplies by machine gunning the funnels of marauding Japanese vessels and then humiliating the captains and officers by making them parade through the streets. Later, Jonhvi Kivits visiting the Seychelles had better watch out. There are plans afoot to make them take their rubbish back with them when they fly home.

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.00am Gilles Peterson 8.00 Emma 9.10am Chris Moyles 10.00am Scott Mills 11.00am Essential Selection 12.00pm John Peel 1.00pm Hootie & the Blowfish 2.00pm Radio 1 Breakfast 3.00pm Radio 1

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Mo Durr 8.00 Sarah Kennedy 10.00 Richard Allen 12.00pm The Huddersfield 1.00pm Eamonn Holmes 2.00pm The Huddersfield 3.00pm The Huddersfield 4.00pm The Huddersfield 5.00pm The Huddersfield 6.00pm The Huddersfield 7.00pm The Huddersfield 8.00pm The Huddersfield 9.00pm The Huddersfield 10.00pm The Huddersfield 11.00pm The Huddersfield 12.00pm The Huddersfield

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

6.00am Procter's Hoops (p) 8.30 Breakfast 9.00 Brian Hayes 12.00 The Midday News 1.00pm Russell and Co 3.00 The Scottish Premier League 4.00pm Kilmarnock 5.00 Drive with Jonathan Legard and Lynn Bowles 7.00pm News Extra with Eric Dixon 7.30pm Alan Gammie's Sportsnight 8.00pm Pat Line 9.00pm O'Donnell's Irish out now Ron Macdonald runs Brentford Football Club 10.00pm Late Night Live 1.00am AF Night 2.00am Richard Dwyer presents worldwide news coverage. Plus, updates from the last day of the 1998 Test between Australia and England in Sydney 4.00pm Extra Time (p)

VIRGIN

6.00am Richard Allen 10.00am Russ Williams 2.00pm Nick Abbott 4.00pm Wheelie of Steel 10.00pm Mark Forrest 2.00am Paul Coyle

TALK RADIO

6.00am Russell Grant's New Year Breakfast 9.00am Kate Lloyd 12.00pm An Audience with Barry Manilow 1.00pm The Sports Zone 8.00am An Audience with Tony Bennett (p) 9.00am Mike Allen 2.00am Mike Dixon

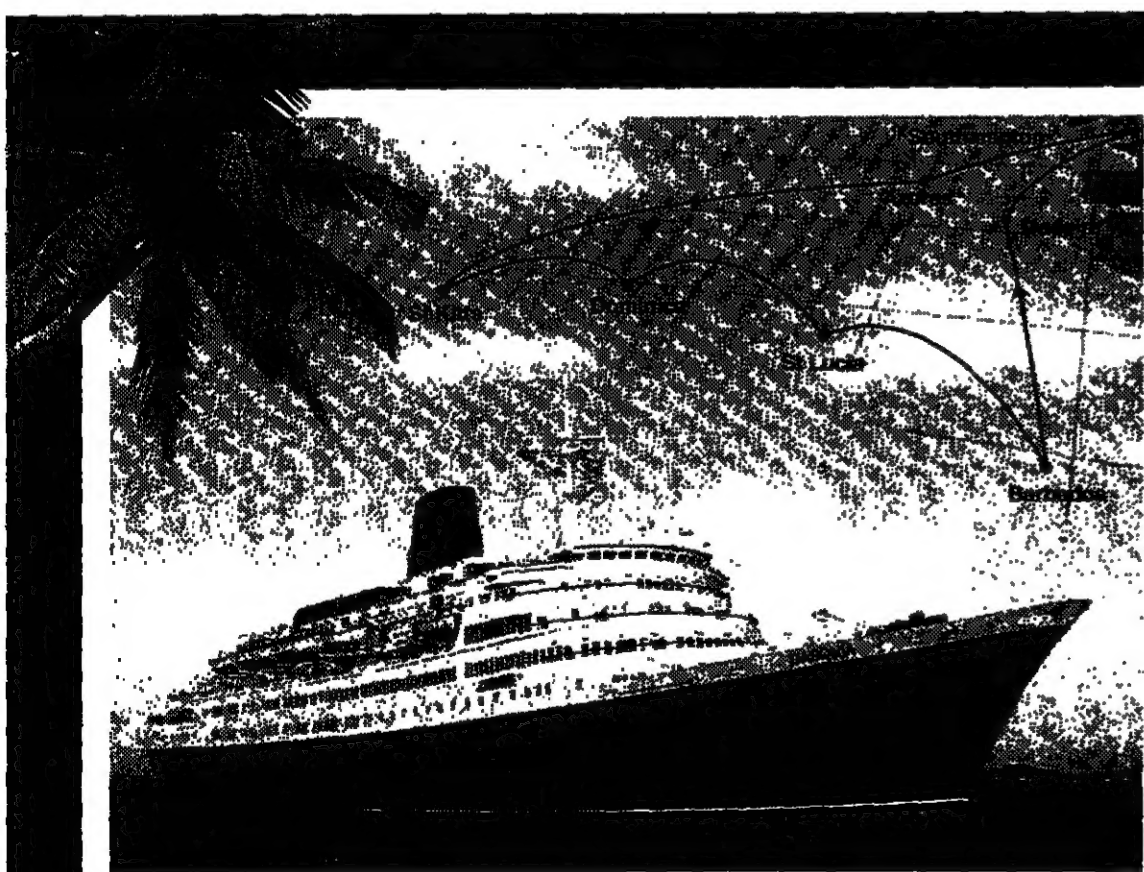
RADIO 3

5.00am A Medieval Christmas Seasonal music 5.30am Music Room Has Natalie Whelan lost her marbles in Stoke Newington? 6.00am Discovering Music with Leonard Station Skelton is joined by the BBC Philharmonic to perform Bolcom (Symphony No 6) (10/10) 7.00am Cabaret Cocktails (4/4) 7.30am Performance on 3 Prom 35, given on August 14. Ruth Ziesak, soprano, Judith Rapp, mezzo, Philip Langridge, tenor, William Walton, City of Birmingham Symphony Chorus and Orchestra under Simon Rattle. *Barbante (The Triumph of Time)*, Beethoven (Symphony No 9 in D) (p) 8.20am Postscript: The Shakespeare Trade Shakespeare (5/5) 9.40am Yvonne Romain Another chance to hear the Russian pianist Yvonne Romain's first solo recital at the 1997 BBC Proms (p) 11.20am The Harmonic Series 11.30am And His Mother Called Him Bill (3/3) (p) 12.00am Composer of the Week: Beethoven 1.00am Through the Night with Donal Macleod. 1.00am Baroque church music for Christmas from the new world 2.10am Beethoven (Masonic Ritual Music) 3.10am Beethoven (Masonic Ritual Music) 4.05am Haydn (Symphony No 11 in E flat)

RADIO 4

4.00am Open Book Humphrey Carpenter explores the life of renaissance old favourites (p) 4.30am The Message Alex Brodie and his guests discuss current media trends 5.00pm PM with Steven Jeffreys and Nigel Wrench 6.00pm Six O'Clock News 6.30pm Quiz of the Year Satirical review of the second half of 1998, with Jeremy Hardy, Simon Hoggart, Laurence Tribe, comedian Alan Ayckmough, 7.00pm The Archers 7.15pm Front Row The Nobel Prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney reads from his collected works and talks to Mark Lawson 7.45pm Under the Roof with Donal Macleod 8.00pm Our Next Question Please? Jonathan Dimbleby looks back on a year of Any Questions? 8.45pm Letter from America by Alastair Cooke 9.00pm The Friday Play: Where Three Roads Meet Don Taylor's story about a vicar's crisis of faith. Starring Michael N. Harbour, Karen Archer, Peter Jeffrey, Frances Jeffer and Robin Sebastian 10.00pm The World Tonight Special with Sue Cameron 10.45pm Book at Bedtime: Five Daffie Patricia Routledge reads *The Way Up to Heaven*, about a waiting couple who reach breaking point. The last of two tales by Roald Dahl 11.00pm Late Night on 4: Late Tackle Sporting conversation 11.30pm Sporting Philanthropists New series investigating the motives of big-hearted British businessmen, beginning with Eddie Kibukunde, unsung hero of the 1998 world (1/5) 12.00pm (FM) News 12.30pm (FM) The Late Book: The Rebirth of Beasts Gavin Milner reads part five of Magnus Mills's story 12.00pm (FM) Test Match Special: Australia v England. Coverage from Sydney of the first day's play in the 1998 Test 12.45pm (FM) Shipping 1.00pm (FM) As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1: FM 97.5-99.5. RADIO 2: FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3: FM 92.4-94.6. RADIO 4: FM 92.4-94.6. LW 198. MW 720. RADIO 5: FM 88.0-90.2. WORLD SERVICE: MW 645. LW 198 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM: FM 100-102. VIRGIN: FM 105.5. MW 1197. 1215. TALK RADIO: MW 1083. 1089. Television and radio listings compiled by Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thornton, Jane Gregory and John McNamara.



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